THE STORY OF THE ABYSSINIAN CAPTIVES

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THE STORY OF THE CAPTIVES

A NARRATIVE

OF THE EVENTS OF

MR. RASSAM'S MISSION TO ABYSSINIA.

BY DR. BLANC,

ONE OF THE CAPTIVES.

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TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED

A TRANSLATION OF M. LE JEAN'S ARTICLES ON ABYSSINIA AND ITS MONARCH.

FROM THE "REVUE DES DEUX MONDES."

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, AND DYER.
1868.

LONDON : W. J. JOHNSON, PRINTER, 121, FLEET-STREET.

PREFACE.

At the moment when every item of reliable information regarding the Abyssinian captives, or the land of their captivity—its people, resources, physical features, climate, &c.,—possesses extraordinary interest and value, a remarkable paper from one of themselves has been received in Bombay. The paper, dated Magdala, August 31, 1867, is compiled by Dr. Blanc, and contains a graphic account of the fortunes attending Mr. Rassam's Mission, from the 20th of July, 1864, the date of its departure from Aden. The Mission, it will be remembered, consisted of Mr. Rassam, Dr. Blanc, and Lieutenant Prideaux, and was charged with the conveyance of the Queen's letter to Theodorus. Great surprise has been expressed at Mr. Rassam's dilatoriness in staying months at Massowah till Theodorus should signify his readiness to receive him, instead of advancing boldly into the country, as a properly qualified British officer should have done; and this delay has been looked upon as a proof of the unfitness of Mr. Rassam for the mission. When at last Theodorus did grant it permission to proceed, he seems to have treated it with contempt,

for instead of allowing Mr. Rassam to select his own route, or pointing out to him the shortest and best, he required him to go by Metemma (a caravan station, situated on the extreme west of Abyssinia, almost on the Nubian frontier), involving a detour of three or four hundred miles. When such was the treatment experienced by the Mission at its outset, we can express no surprise at its results.

Dr. Blanc's report has been divided by himself into three sections, the first describing the journey from Massowah to Metemma, the experiences of the road, the disposition and habits of the various Arab tribes, and giving a mass of other information entirely new. The second section contains an account of the reception of the mission by the King, and their subsequent treatment. Of their prospects, Dr. Blanc says little, and was plainly unaware that an expedition was on its way to release them, or avenge their death. But for their chains, the condition of the prisoners would seem to have been tolerably comfortable. They knew not, however, what a day might bring forth. The Emperor was rioting in blood, and, as far as his crippled power would admit, satiating his one desire—revenge. The best hope of the Mission seemed to be that they might fall into the hands of some rebel chief who would know their value; and they plainly dread the ignorant and infuriated peasantry, who might regard them as in some way the authors of the misery which they have lately endured at the hands of the Negus. The last section of the Mémoir gives a variety of interesting details regarding the physical geography of Abyssinia, its towns

and population; the language and customs, and degradation of its people; its flora and fauna; and the personal character, appearance, and history of Theodorus.

Strictly watched as the captives are, and forbidden to write, we may well wonder how it was possible for any of them thus to compile a lengthy report, containing much which, if discovered, would certainly have brought down the Emperor's vengeance upon them. And, indeed, the compilation of the report was no easy matter. Dr. Blanc says on this point—"I was obliged on two occasions to burn my report; first, on being made prisoner in April, 1866, when we thought it advisable to destroy every note, letter, or paper in our possession. At Gaffat I began to write it for the second time, but after the events that occurred there, I seized the first opportunity of making away with it. At Magdala it is exceedingly difficult to write; spies are constantly peeping into our tent on some pretext or other. The risk and penalty are great, as the order is, that any one found writing is to be chained hand and foot." In spite of this risk and penalty, however, Dr. Blanc's report is, according to the *Times of India*, "a marvel of neatness, exhibiting "the greatest patience and care. Paper and ink "are scarce at Magdala, and he has certainly been "careful not to waste either. So closely packed "are the letters, words, and lines, that into sixteen "sheets of note-paper is compressed material "enough to fill three pages of the (London) *Times* "—less about a quarter of a column! So thin, "likewise, is the paper, that the whole—report,

" covering letter, envelope, and all—weighs less " than an ounce."

Most of the papers relating to Abyssinia that have recently been published, are either written by Englishmen or filtered by English writers, and it seems to have occurred to the *Times of India* that an interesting side-light might be thrown on Abyssinian affairs, by viewing them through a Frenchman's description. " Of course," says that journal, " we do not mean that a fanatic like M. Bisson, " whose incoherent declamation recently filled three " columns of the *Patrie*, can be of any service to " us; but in M. Guillaume Le Jean, a gentleman " not unknown in Bombay, we have a guide who, " allowing for national peculiarities, is thoroughly " trustworthy. M. Le Jean, it may be remembered, " was in Bombay about the close of last year, and " several besides ourselves will have seen the " pencil sketch of the Negus, which that gentleman " had with him at the time. He was in Abyssinia " as French Envoy in 1863, and narrowly escaped " becoming a companion of Consul Cameron. About " three years ago, he contributed to the *Revue des* " *Deux Mondes* two lengthy papers on Abyssinia " and its monarch; and from these we have selected, " in tolerably consecutive order, a series of extracts, " which give the more salient points of both M. Le " Jean's papers. The translation has been done " somewhat hurriedly, and the aim has been to give " a faithful transcript of the Frenchman's state- " ments and views, rather than a finished rendering

" of the narrative. Readers will make their own " reflections as they glance through the papers, but " we must impress upon them that whenever M. Le " Jean refers to events and scenes which had only " just transpired, it is needful to remember that he " wrote three years ago. Notwithstanding this, we " think it will be apparent to many, that the writer's " appreciation of the political position of Theodorus, " and his estimate of that strange monarch's cha- " racter, are suggestive of some curious, if not im- " portant reflections."

The interest of M. Le Jean's narrative will, it is believed, be found sufficient to warrant a reproduction of the translation thus made for the Indian public a few weeks ago; the more so, as that translation is inaccessible in its present shape to persons in this country.

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THE STORY OF THE ABYSSINIAN CAPTIVES.

DIARY OF DR. BLANC.

On the 20th of July, 1864, Mr. Rassam and myself left Aden for Massowah, on a special mission to Theodorus, Emperor of Abyssinia.

On the morning of the 23rd, at a distance of about thirty miles from the shore, we sighted the high land of Abyssinia, formed of several consecutive ranges, all running from N. to S., the more distant being also the highest; some of the peaks, such as Taranta, ranging between 12,000 and 13,000 feet.

As the outline of the coast became more distinct, the sight of a small island covered with white houses, surrounded by green groves, reflecting their welcome shadows in the quiet blue water of the bay, gave us a thrill of delight; it seemed as if at last we had come to one of those enchanted spots of the East, so often described, so seldom seen, and to the longing of our anxious hearts the quick motion of the steamer seemed slow to satisfy our ardent wishes. But nearer and nearer we approached the shore; then one by one all our illusions disappeared, the pleasant imagery vanished, and the stern reality of mangrove swamps, sandy and sunburnt beach, wretched and squalid huts,

stared us in the face. Instead of the semi-Paradise distance had painted to our imagination, we found (and, alas! remained long enough to ascertain the fact itself) that the land of our temporary residence could be described in three words—sun, dirt, and desolation.

Massowah, latitude 15.36 N., longitude 39.30 E., is one of the many coral islands that abound in the Red Sea; it is but a few feet above high water mark, about a mile in length, and a quarter in breadth. Towards the north it is separated from the mainland by a narrow creek about 200 yards in breadth, and is distant from Arkiko, a small town situated at the western extremity of the bay, about two miles. Half a-mile south of Massowah, another small coral island, almost parallel to the one we describe, covered with mangroves and other rank vegetation, the proud owner of a Sheik's tomb of great veneration, lies between Massowah and the Gedem peak, the high mountain forming the southern boundary of the bay.

The western half of the island of Massowah is covered with houses; a few two stories high, built of coral rock, the remainder small wooden huts with straw roofs. The first are inhabited by the wealthier merchants and brokers, the Turkish officials, and the few Banians, European consuls, and merchants whose unfortunate fate has cast them on this inhospitable shore. There is not a building worth mentioning; the Pasha's residence is a large, ungainly mansion, remarkable only for its extreme filthiness. During our stay the offensive smell from the accumulation of dirt on the yards and staircases of the Palace was quite overwhelming; and as the Irregulars on guard used these places as most convenient for a certain purpose, it is easier

to imagine than to describe the abominable stench that pervaded the whole place. The few mosques are without importance—miserable whitewashed coral buildings. One, however, under construction, promised to be a shade better than the others.

The streets—if by this name we may qualify the narrow and irregular lanes that run between the houses—are kept pretty clean, with or without municipal intervention I cannot say. Except in front of the Pasha's residence, there is no open space worthy of the name of square. The houses are much crowded together, many even being half built on the sea by means of piles. Land is of such value on this spot so little known, that reclamation was at several points going on, though I do not suppose that shares and dividends were either issued or promised.

The landing-place is near the centre of the island, opposite to the gates of the town. These are regularly shut at eight P.M.; why, it is difficult to say, as it is possible to land on any part of the island quite as easily, if not more easily, than on the greasy pier. On the landing-place a few huts have been erected by the Collector of Customs and his subordinates; these, surrounded by the brokers and tallow-scented Bedouins, register the imports, exacting such duties as they like, before the merchandize is allowed to be purchased by the Banians or conveyed to the bazaar for sale. This last-named place—the *sine quâ non* of all Eastern towns—is a wretched affair. Still, the Bedouin beau, the Bashi-bazouk, the native girls, and the many *flaneurs* of the place, must find some attractions in its precincts, as though redolent with effluvia of the worst description, and swarming with flies, it is, during part

of the day, the rendezvous of a merry and jostling crowd.

The eastern half of the island contains the burial-ground, the water-tanks, the Roman Catholic mission-house, and a small fort.

The burial-ground begins almost with the last houses, the boundary between the living and the dead being merely nominal. To improve the closer relationship between the two, the water-tanks are placed amongst the "dear departed!" Fortunately, there are but few tanks still in good condition. After heavy showers, the surface drainage finds its way into the reservoirs, carrying with it the detritus of all the accumulated filth of the last year or two, and adds to the good quality of the water an infusion of human bodies, in all stages of decomposition. Still, the water is highly prized, and, strange to say, seems to have no noxious effects on the drinkers. At the north and south points of this part of the island two buildings have been erected—the one the emblem of good-will and peace; the other, of war and strife—the mission-house and the fort. But it is difficult to decide which of the two means the most mischief; many are inclined to give the palm to the worthy fathers' abode. The fort appears formidable, but only at a great distance. On near approach it is found to be but a relic of former ages, a crumbled-down ruin, too weak to bear any longer its three old rusty guns now lying on the ground, the terror, not of the neighbourhood, but of the unfortunate gunner, who has already lost an arm whilst endeavouring to return a salute through their honeycombed tubes. On the other hand, the mission-house, garbed in immaculate whiteness, smiles radiantly

around, inviting instead of repulsing the invader—a nymph on the lovely shore charming all by her captivating aspect. But within, are they always words of love that fill the echoes of the dome? Is peace the only sound that issues from its walls? Though the past speaks volumes, and though the history of the Roman Church is written in letters of blood all over the Abyssinian land, let us hope that the fears of the people have no foundation, and that the missionaries here, like all Christian missionaries, labour under one banner, and only strive to promote one object—the cause of Christ.

Massowah, as well as the immediate surrounding country, is mainly dependent on Abyssinia for its supplies. Joharee is the staple food; wheat is little used; rice is a favourite amongst the better classes. Goats and sheep are killed daily in the bazaar, cows on rare occasions, but, of all, the flesh of the camel is the most esteemed, though, on account of the expense, rarely indulged in except on great occasions.

The inhabitants being Mussulmans, water is the ordinary beverage; *tej* and araki (made from honey) can, however, be purchased in the bazaar. The limited supply of water obtained from the few remaining tanks is quite inadequate to meet the wants of even a small portion of the community; water is consequently brought in daily from the wells a few miles north of Massowah, and from Arkiko. The first is brought in leather bags by the young girls of the village; the latter conveyed in boats across the bay. The water in both cases is brackish, but that from Arkiko highly so. For this reason, and also on account of the greater facility in the transport, it is

cheaper, and is purchased only by the poorer inhabitants.

To avoid useless repetitions, before speaking of the population, climate, diseases, &c., a short account of the immediate neighbourhood is necessary.

About four miles north of Massowah is Toomboo, a large village of about a thousand huts, the first place where we meet with sweet water; a mile and a quarter further inland we came upon Moncullou, a smaller but better built village. A mile westward of the last place we find the small village of Zaga. These, with a small hamlet east of Tomlah, constitute all the inhabited portions of this sterile region. The next village, Ailat, about twenty miles from Massowah, is built on the first terrace of the Abyssinian range, 600 feet above the level of the sea. All these villages are situated in the midst of a sandy and desolate plain; in a few, mimosas, aloes, senna plants, and cactuses struggle for life in the burning sand. The country residences of the English and French consuls shine like oases in this desert, great pains having been taken to introduce trees that thrive even in such a locality.

The wells are the wealth of the villages—their very existence. Most probably, huts after huts have been erected in their vicinity until the actual prosperous villages have arisen, surrounded as they are on all sides by a burnt and desert tract. The wells number about twenty. Many old ones are closed, but new ones are frequently dug, so as to keep up a constant supply of water. The reason old wells are abandoned is, that after a while the water becomes very brackish. In a new well the water is almost sweet. The water obtained from these wells proceeds

from two different sources: First, from the high mountains in the vicinity. [The rain filters and impregnates the soil, but not being able to soak beyond a certain depth, on account of the volcanic rocks of the undersoil, forms a small stratum always met with at a certain depth.] Secondly, from the sea by filtration. The wells, though about four miles from the shore, are only from twenty to twenty-five feet deep, and consequently on or below the level of the sea.

The proof of an undercurrent of water, due to the presence of the high range of mountains, becomes more apparent as the traveller advances into the interior; though the soil is still sandy and barren, and little vegetation can as yet be seen, trees and shrubs become more plentiful, and of a large size. A few miles further inland, even during the summer months, it is always possible to obtain water by digging to the depth of a few feet in the dried-up bed of a water-torrent.

It often struck me that what Artesian wells have done for the Sahara they could equally accomplish for this region. The locality seems even more favourable, and there is every hope that, like the great African desert, the now desolate land of Samhar could be transformed into a rich date-bearing land.

Taken as they are, these wells could certainly be improved. On our arrival at Moncullon, we found the water of the well belonging to the consular residence scarcely used, on account of its very brackish taste; we had the well emptied, a large quantity of saltish sand removed, and we dug deeper until large rocks appeared. The result was that we had the best well in the place, and

requests for our water were made by many, including the Pasha himself. Unfortunately, the forefathers of the present Moncullites never did such a thing to their wells, and as all innovations are distasteful to a semi-civilized race, the fact was admired, but not imitated.

Arkiko, at the extremity of the bay, is much nearer the mountains than the villages situated north of Massowah, but the village is built almost on the beach itself; the wells, not a hundred yards from the sea, are also much more superficial than those on the northern side, consequently the sea-water, having a much shorter distance to filter through, retains a greater quantity of saline particles, and I believe, were it not for the presence of a small quantity of sweet water from the hills, it would be quite unpalatable.

In the neighbourhood of Massowah there are several hot mineral springs. Most important are those of Adulis and Ailat.

The springs of Adulis* are only a few hundred yards from the sea-shore, surrounded by a pleasing green patch covered with a vigorous vegetation. It is the rendezvous of myriads of birds and of quadrupeds, who morning and evening swarm thither to quench their thirst.

At Ailat† the source issues from basaltic rocks situated on a small plateau between high and precipitous mountains. At the source itself the temperature is 141 Fahren-

* A short time before our departure for the interior, some of the water of the hot springs of Adulis was collected and forwarded to Bombay for analysis.

† Water collected and sent to Bombay November, 1864.

heit, but as the water flows down the different ravines, it gradually cools until it differs in no way from other mountain streams. It is palatable, and used by the inhabitants of Ailat for all purposes. It is also highly esteemed by the Bedouins. On account of its medicinal properties, numbers resort to the natural baths, formed of hollowed volcanic rocks, for every variety of disease. From what I could gather, it appears to prove beneficial in chronic rheumatism and in diseases of the skin. Probably in these cases any warm water would act as well, considering the usual morbid condition of the integument in those dirty and unwashed races.

The population of Massowah, including the surrounding villages (as far, at least, as I could ascertain), amounts to 10,000 inhabitants. The Massowah race is far from pure. It is a mixture of Turkish, Arab, and African blood. The features are generally good, the nose straight, but the hair is in many instances short and curly; the skin is brown, the lips often large, the teeth even and white. The men are of the middle height; the women under it. So much for their physical appearance. Morally they are ignorant and superstitious, having apparently retained but few of their forefathers' virtues, but a great many of their vices. A very good distinction can be made in the male portion of the community, between those who wear turbans and long white shirts, and those hard-working wretches who, girded with a single leather skin, roam about with their flocks in search of pasture and water. The first live I know not how. They call themselves brokers! It is true three or four times a-year caravans arrive from the interior, but as a rule, with the exception of a skin or two of honey, and

a few bags of jowaree, nothing is imported. What possible business can about 500 brokers have? How ten dollars worth of honey and fifty of grain can give a brokerage sufficient to clothe and feed, not only themselves, but also their families, is a problem I have often, but in vain, endeavoured to solve!

In the East, children, instead of being a burden to poor people, are often (at Massowah they certainly are) a source of wealth. The young girls of Moncullou, &c., bring in a pretty good income to their parents. I know big, strong, but lazy fellows who would squat down all day in the shade of their huts, living on the earnings of two or three little girls, who daily went once or twice to Massowah laden with a large skin full of water. The water-girls vary in age from eight to sixteen. The younger ones are rather pretty, small, but well made, the hair neatly braided and falling on the shoulders. A small piece of cotton reaching from the waist to the knee is generally the only garment of the poorest. Those better off wear also a piece of plaid thrown gracefully across the shoulders. The right nostril is ornamented with a small copper ring; as a substitute, a shirt button is much esteemed, and during our stay our buttons were in constant demand.

If we take into consideration that Massowah is situated within the tropics, possessing no running stream, that it seldom rains, and is surrounded by burning deserts, the conclusion we could beforehand have arrived at is, that the climate of Massowah is essentially hot and dry.

From November to March the nights are cool, and during that period the day, in a good house or tent, is pleasant enough. From April to October the nights are

close, and often very oppressive. During those hot months, both in the morning before the sea-breeze springs up, and in the evening when it has died away, all animal creation falls into a torpid state. The perfect calm that then reigns is as fearful in its stillness as painful in its effects.

From May to August sand-storms frequently occur. They begin usually at four P.M. (though occasionally they appear in the morning), and last from a few minutes only to a couple of hours. Long before the storm is felt, the horizon towards the N.N.W. is quite dark; a black cloud extends from the sea to the mountain range, and as it advances the sun itself is obscured. A few minutes of dead calm, and then suddenly the dark column approaches; all seems to disappear before it, and the roar of the terrible hurricane of wind and sand now coursing over the land is almost sublime in its horrors. Coming after the moist sea breeze, the hot and dry wind appears quite cool, though the thermometer rises to 110 or 115 degrees. After the storm a gentle land breeze follows, and often lasts all night. The amount of sand carried by the wind in these storms can be imagined by the mere mention that we could not discern, at a short distance from us, such a large object as a tent.

It seldom rains; occasionally there are a few showers in August and November.

As far as Europeans are concerned, climates like the one we have just described cannot be considered as unhealthy; they debilitate and weaken the system, predispose to tropical diseases, but seldom engender them. I expected to find many cases of scurvy, due to the brackish condition of the water, and to the absence of

vegetables; but either scurvy did not exist to a great extent, or did not come under my observation, as during my stay I did not meet with more than three or four cases. Fevers affect the natives after a fall of rain, and though some cases are of a very pernicious type, the majority belong to the simple intermittent or remittent, and yield rapidly to a proper treatment. Venereal diseases are common amongst the garrison.

Small-pox now and then makes fearful ravages. When it breaks out, a mild case is chosen, and from it a great many are inoculated. The mortality is considerable amongst those who submit to the operation. On several occasions during the summer I received vaccine lymph, and inoculated with it. In no case did it take, owing, I suppose, to the extreme heat of the weather. During the cold weather I applied again, but could not obtain any. The greatest mortality is due to childbirth—a strange fact, as in the East confinements are generally easy. The practice in use has probably much to do with this unfavourable result. The woman is confined on all fours, the child allowed to fall on the ground, and the afterbirth to follow of its own accord. After the confinement the woman is placed upon an alga (small native bed). Underneath, fire with aromatic herbs is so arranged as almost to suffocate the newly-delivered woman. Diarrhœa was frequent during the summer of 1865, and dysentery at the same period proved fatal to many.

Diseases of the eyes are seldom met with, except simple inflammation caused by the heat and glare of the sun. I suffered from a severe attack of ophthalmia, and was obliged in consequence to proceed to Aden for a few

weeks. I have met with no case of disease of the lungs, and bronchial affections seem almost unknown. I had occasion to attend upon cases of neuralgia, and one of gouty rheumatism.

For several years locusts have been committing great damage to the crops. In 1864 they occasioned a certain scarcity and dearness of the first necessities of life, but in 1865 the whole of Tigray, Hamasein, Bogos, &c., had been laid waste by swarms of locusts. From being difficult to obtain, at last no supplies whatever reached from the interior. The local Government sent to Hodeida and other ports for grain and rice, and so avoided the horrors of a complete famine. As it was, numbers died, and many half-starved wretches were ready victims for such a disease as cholera. [The last-named scourge made its appearance in October, 1865, at the time we were making our preparations to proceed into the interior.] Under such circumstances, it is not astonishing that the epidemic was severely felt. Almost all those who had been suffering from the effects of insufficient or inferior food became an easy prey; few, indeed, of those who contracted the disease rallied; almost all died. During our residence at Massowah, out of the small community of Europeans five died, two from heat apoplexy, two from debility, and one from cholera. (None came under my care.) The Pasha himself was several times on the point of death, from great debility and complete loss of tone of the digestive organs. He was at last prevailed upon to leave, and saved his life by a timely trip to sea.

The Bedouins of the Samhar, like all bigoted and ignorant savages, have great confidence in charms, amulets, and

exorcisms. The "medicine man" is generally an old, venerable-looking Sheik—a great rascal, with all his sanctified looks. His most usual prescription is to write a few lines of the Koran upon a piece of parchment, wash off the ink with water, and hand it over to the patient to drink; at other times the writing is enclosed in small squares of red leather, and applied to the seat of the disease. The Mullah is no contemptible rival of his, though he also applies the all-efficacious words of the revealed "cow." He effects more rapid cures by spitting several times upon the sick person, muttering between each ejection appropriate prayers which no evil spirit could withstand, should his already sanctified spittle not have been sufficient to cast them off. Massowah boasts, moreover, of a regular medical practitioner, in the shape of an old Bashi-bazouk. Though superior in intelligence to the Sheik and the Mullah, his medical knowledge is on a par with theirs. He possesses a few drugs, given to him by travellers; but as he is not acquainted with their properties or doses, he wisely keeps them on a shelf for the admiration of the natives, and employs simples, with which, if he effects no wonderful cures, he still does no harm. Our *confrère* is not at all conceited, though he no doubt imposes upon the credulity of the aborigines. When we meet in "consultation," he always, with becoming meekness, acknowledges his ignorance.

Massowah, as I have already stated, is built on a coral rock; the same formation exists on many parts of the coast, and forms cliffs, some of them thirty feet above the level of the sea. Further inland, towards Moncullou and Tumlah, volcanic rocks begin to appear, scattered here and

there as if carelessly thrown in the sandy plain; isolated landmarks over the level space, they soon become more and more united, increasing in number, size, and importance, until the mountains themselves are reached, where almost every stone declares the predominance of the volcanic formation.

The flora is scanty, and belongs, with but few exceptions, to the *Leguminosæ*. Several varieties of antelopes roam over the desert. Partridges, pigeons, and several species of the *Natatores* at certain seasons, arrive in great numbers. Apart from these, nothing useful to man is met with amongst the other members of the animal creation, consisting principally of hosts of hyenas, snakes, scorpions, and innumerable insects.

On the 8th August, 1865, we at last received an answer from the Abyssinian Emperor. We had waited more than a year at Massowah for permission to enter his country, and present him with the letter of our gracious Queen. We had been so much more annoyed at this long delay, that it was confidently expected that when Theodorus should receive Queen Victoria's letter, he would at once comply with her request, and not only release the European captives, but allow them to return to their homes and families. This messenger also brought the gratifying news that Captain Cameron's chains had been opened. We waited twenty days, hourly expecting messages from the captives themselves; but none came, and we were at last obliged to leave, without receiving any confirmation of the messenger's story. We proceeded to Egypt by Her Majesty's ship Victoria, in order to communicate the intelligence to Government, and receive instructions. After

a stay of ten days in Egypt, we returned to Massowah, and anchored for the second time in its harbour on the 25th September. Letters from the captives had arrived in the meanwhile; but, instead of being free, they informed us that the day following the departure of Her Majesty's messenger for the coast they had been loaded with additional fetters. We were very much grieved and disappointed at this intelligence, as it augured badly for the success of our mission. The Emperor's letter was anything but courteous; he had not even affixed his seal to it, and we were directed to proceed by the roundabout way of the Soudan, and to advise him of our arrival at Metemma. On the 27th we proceeded to Aden to complete our stores, and returned to Massowah on the 8th October. In the interval cholera had broken out, and was raging with great violence at Massowah and its neighbourhood.

On the afternoon of the 15th October, all our preparations being apparently complete, the mission, composed of Mr. H. Rassam, Lieut. W. F. Prideaux, of Her Majesty's Bombay Staff Corps, and myself, started on its dangerous enterprise. We were accompanied by a nephew of the Naib of Arkiko; and an escort of Turkish Irregulars had been graciously sent by the Pasha to protect our sixty camels, laden with our personal luggage, stores, and presents for the Ethiopic monarch. We also took with us several Portuguese and other Indian servants, and several natives of Massowah as muleteers.

On a first march something is always found wanting. On this occasion many of the cameleers were unprovided with ropes; boxes, portmanteau bags, were strewed all

over the road, and night was far advanced before the last camel reached Moncullou. A halt was in consequence absolutely necessary, so that the actual start was only made on the afternoon of the 16th.

From Moncullou our route lay N.W. across the desert of Schob, a dreary wilderness of sand, intersected by two winter torrents, generally dry; but by digging in their sandy beds it is possible at all seasons to obtain some muddy water. The rapidity with which these torrents fill up is most astonishing.

During the summer of 1865, we had made a trip to Af-Abed, in the Hababs' country. On our return, whilst crossing the desert, we experienced a very severe storm. We had just reached our encamping ground on the southern bank of one of these watercourses, and half the camels had already crossed the dry bed of the river, when, on a sudden, a tremendous roar was heard, shortly afterwards followed by a fearful rush of water. In the former empty torrent now dashed a mighty stream, tearing down trees and rocks, so that no human being could possibly cross. Our luggage and servants were still on the opposite bank, and although we were only a stonesthrow from the party so suddenly cut off from us, we had to spend the night on the bare ground, with no other covering than our clothing.

In the very centre of the desert of Schob, arises Amba Goneb, a conical basaltic rock several hundred feet high, an advanced sentry detached from the now approaching mountains. On the evening of the 18th, we reached Ain, and from the glaring and dreary desert passed into a lovely valley, watered by a small winding stream, cool

and limpid, shaded by mimosas and tamarinds, and glowing with the freshness and luxuriance of tropical vegetation.*

We were fortunate enough to leave the cholera behind us. Apart from a few cases of diarrhœa, easily checked, the whole party was in excellent health; every one in high spirits at the prospect of visiting almost unknown regions, and above all for having at last bid adieu to Massowah, where we had spent in anxious expectation long and dreary months.

From Ain to Mahaber† the road is most picturesque; always following the winding of the small river Ain, here and there compressed to only a few yards by perpendicular walls of trachyte, or basalt; further on expanding into miniature green plateaux, bordered by conical hills, covered to the very summit by mimosas and huge cactuses, alive with large hordes of antelopes (the Agazin), which, bounding from rock to rock, scared by their frolics the countless host of huge baboons. The valley itself, graced by the presence of gaudy-feathered and sweet singing birds, echoed to the shrill cry of the numerous guinea-fowl, so tame, that the repeated reports of our firearms did not disturb them in the least.

At Mahaber we were obliged to remain several days awaiting fresh camels, the Hababs who had now to supply us, frightened by the presence of the hairy nephew of the Naib and the Bashi-bazouks, made themselves scarce, and it was only after much parley and the repeated assurance that every one would be paid, that the camels at last made

* The distance from Massowah to Ain is about forty-five miles.

† From Ain to Mahaber (direction E. by N.) about twenty miles.

their appearance. The Hababs are a large pastoral tribe, inhabiting the Ad Temiriam, a hilly and well-watered district, about fifty miles north-west of Massowah, included between longitude 38.39 and latitude 16 to 16.30. They represent the finest tribe of the roving Bedouins; of middle height, muscular, well made, they claim an Abyssinian origin. With the exception of a darker hue of the skin, certainly in other respects they do not differ from the inhabitants of the table-land, and have but few characteristics of the aboriginal African races. Some fifty years ago they were a Christian tribe—nominally, at least—but were converted to Mohammedanism by an old Sheik, still alive, who resides near Moncullou, and is an object of great veneration all over the Samhar. Once their doubts removed, their suspicions lulled, the Hababs proved themselves friendly, willing, and obliging.

Gratitude is no common virtue in Africa, at least as far as my own experience goes. Its rarity brings back to my memory a fact that I will here record. On our previous trip to the Ad Temiriam, I had seen several patients, amongst them a young man suffering from remittent fever, and I gave him some medicine. Hearing of our arrival at Mahaber, he came to thank me, bringing as an offering a small skin of milk. He apologized for the absence of his aged father, who also, he said, wished to kiss my feet, but the distance (about eight miles) was too much for the old man's strength.

On the 23rd we started for Mahaber, going due west, and following for eight miles longer the charming valley of Ain. Afterwards we diverged to the left, going in a south-west direction, until we reached the province of

Barka; when again our route lay west by north, until again we came to Zaga. From this point to Kassala the general direction is west by south.* From Mahaber to Adarte the road is very pleasant; for several days we continually ascended, and the more we advanced into the mountainous region the more agreeable and pleasant did we feel it, and we enjoyed the sight of splendid and luxuriant vegetation.

On the 25th we crossed the Anseba, a large river flowing from the high lands of Bogos, Hamasien, and Mensa, and joining the river Barka at Tjab.†

We spent a pleasant day in the beautiful Ansebas valley, but aware of the danger of remaining after sunset near its flowery but malarious banks, we pitched our tent on a rising ground at some distance, and the next morning proceeded to Haboob, the highest point we had to gain before descending into the Barka through the difficult pass of Sookum. After this abrupt descent of more than 2,000 feet, the roads generally slope towards the low land of Barka.

From Ain to Haboob‡ the country is well wooded, and watered by innumerable small streams. The soil is formed of the detritus of the volcanic rocks, specially of feldspar; pumice abounds in the ravines. Channels for the rivulets are the only roads for the traveller. This mountain chain

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* The distance from Mahaber to Adarte on the frontier of Barka is about fifty miles; from Adarte to Kassala about 130 miles.

† Tjab, lat. 17.10, long. 37.15.

‡ The Anseba, at the point we crossed, is about 4,000 feet above the level of the sea; Haboob about 4,500.

is, on the whole, a pleasant spot, more delightful for the reason that it rises between the arid shores of the Red Sea and the flat, hot, and level plains of the Soudan. The province of Barka is a boundless plain, about 2,500 feet above the level of the sea, covered at the time of our journey with half-dried grass, some five or six feet high, and dotted here and there with small woods of stunted mimosas.

From Barka to Metemma we find alluvium as the general formation.

Water is scarce, even a month after the rainy season all the rivers are dried up, and water is only obtained by digging in the sand of the dry beds of the river Barka and its tributaries. When we passed through these plains many spots were still green, but a few months later we should have crossed a parched-up prairie little better than the desert itself.

Our pretty songsters of Ain are no more to be seen. The guinea-fowl is seldom met with, and only a few tiny antelopes wander over the solitary expanse. Instead, we are now aroused by the roar of the lion, the laugh of the hyena, and we must protect our sheep and goat, as the spotted leopard is lurking around our tents.

On the 31st of October we reached Zaga, a large sloping plain situated at the junction of the Barka and the Mogareib. Water can be obtained at that spot by digging wells in the dried-up beds of the rivers in sufficient quantity to have induced the Beni Amers to make it their winter encamping ground.

We had agreed with the Hababs that we would exchange camels at this spot, but for love or money none could be obtained. It was lucky for us that the Bedouins had by

this time found out that all white men are not Turks, otherwise we should have been cast helpless in the very centre of Barka. The Beni Amers could never be induced even to acknowledge that they had camels, though more than 10,000 were grazing under our very eyes.

The Beni Amers are Arabs, and speak the Arab language, and have conserved up to the present day all the characteristics of their race. A roving Bedouin of the Yemen and a Beni Amer are so much alike that it seems hardly credible that the Beni Amers possess no record of their advent on the African coast, or of the causes that induced them to leave the land of their ancestors. The long, black, silky hair has not acquired the woolly texture of that of the sons of Ham. The small extremities, the well-knit limbs, the straight nose and small lips, the dark bronzed complexion, distinguish them alike from the Shangallas and the Barias as from the mixed races of the plateaux.

A piece of cloth a few yards in length, with that elegance peculiar to the savage, is folded round the body. Even with this dirty rag, like the Italian beggar, they must be admired, not only for their beautiful form, but also for the air of impudence and roguery displayed in the bright glare of their dark eyes. They retain, however, to a high degree, that nuisance so well described by a distinguished traveller in the East, and, like their brethren of the Arabian shore, they are a race of *bavardes*. They pay a nominal tribute to the Egyptian Government, and the reason we could not obtain camels was that, troops being moved about, they feared that on their arrival at Kassala they would be pressed into the Government service, and not only receive no pay, but most likely in the end lose

the greater number of their camels. This tribe roams along the banks of the Barka and its many tributaries. Zaga is only their winter station; at other times they wander over the immense plains north of Barka in search of pasture and water for their innumerable flocks. All over the district of Zaga camps appeared in every direction; the herds of cattle, especially camels, seemed without number; this all indicates that they form a wealthy, powerful tribe. We encamped near their head-quarters, where resides the Sheik of all the Beni Amers, Ahmed, surrounded by his wives, children, and followers. He is a man of middle age, conspicuous among his cunning followers by a shrewd and crafty look. He was friendly to us, and presented us with a few sheep and cows. His camp covered several acres of ground, the whole enclosed by a strong fence, the wigwams built in a circle a few feet from the hedge. The open space in the centre is reserved for the cattle, always driven in at night. The chief's small circular wood and grass huts contrasted favourably with the dwellings of his followers. These, constructed in a circle, are formed by thrusting into the ground the extremities of small branches; a few pieces of coarse matting thrown over them complete the structure. They cannot be more than four feet high, and the average circumference twelve feet; nevertheless, some eight or ten unwashed faces were seen peeping through the small door, staring with their black, frightened eyes at the strange white men. Small-pox was raging at the time with great virulence; fever also was daily claiming many victims.

I gave medicine to several of the sufferers, and good hygienic advice to Sheik Ahmed. He listened with all

becoming respect to the good things that fell from the akim's lips; he would see, but they had never done so before, and with all Mussulman bigotry and superstition put an end to the conversation by an "Allah Kareem." On the 3rd of November we were again on the march. On the 5th we arrived at Sabderat, the first permanent village we had met with since leaving Moncullou. This village—in appearance similar to those of the Samhar—is built on the side of a large granitic mountain, cleft in two from the summit to the base. Numerous wells are dug in the dried-up bed of the water-course that separates the village. The inhabitants of this divided village contend often between themselves for the possession of the precious fluid; and when the rushing waters have disappeared, human passions too often fill with strife and warfare the then quiet bed of the stream.

On the morning of November 6 we entered Kassala. The Naïb's nephew had preceded us to inform the Governor of our arrival, and present him with a letter recommending us to the care of the authorities, written by the Pasha of Egypt. To honour us according to his master's firman, the Governor sent all the garrison to meet us a few miles from the town, and sent a polite apology for his absence, due to sickness. The senior partner of the Greek firm of Paniotti also came to welcome us, and afford us the hospitality of his house and board.

Kassala, the capital of Takka, a walled town near the river Gash, containing about 10,000 inhabitants, is on the model of most modern Egyptian towns, public as well as private buildings being alike of mud. The arsenal, barracks, &c., are the only buildings of any importance. Beautiful

gardens have been made at a short distance from the town, near the river Gash, by the European portion of the community. Just before, and immediately after the rains, the place is very unhealthy. During those months malarious fever and dysentery prevail to a great extent.

Kassala, formerly a prosperous city, the centre of all the trade of the immense tract of country included from Massowah and Suakin to the Nile, and from Nubia to Abyssinia, was, at the date of our arrival, almost deserted, covered with ruins and rank vegetation, destitute of the most common necessaries of life, the spectre of its former self, haunted by its few remaining ghostlike and plague-stricken citizens. Kassala had just gone through the ordeal of a mutiny of Nubian troops. Pernicious fevers, malignant dysenteries, and cholera had decimated both rebels and loyals; war and sickness had marched hand in hand to make of this fair oasis of the Soudan a wilderness painful to contemplate. The mutiny broke out in July. The Nubian troops had not been paid for two years, and when they claimed a portion of their arrears, they only met with a stern refusal. Under these circumstances, it is not astonishing that they became ready listeners to the treasonable words and extravagant promises made to them by one of their petty chiefs, named Denda, a descendant of the former Nubian kings. They matured their plot in great secresy, and every one was horrified one morning to learn that the black troops had broken out in open mutiny and murdered their officers, and, no more restrained, had followed their natural inclinations to revel in carnage and plunder. A few Egyptian troops had, luckily, possession of the arsenal, and held it against these

infuriated savages until troops could arrive from Kedaref and Khartoum. The Europeans and Egyptians gallantly defended their part of the town. They erected walls and small earthworks between themselves and the mutineers. Continually on the alert, though few in number, they repulsed with great gallantry the assault of the fiends thirsting for their lives and property. Egyptian troops poured in from all directions and relieved the besieged city. More than a thousand of the mutineers were killed near the gates of the town; nearly a thousand more were tried and executed; and those who attempted to escape the vengeance of the merciless Pasha, and fled for safety to the wilderness, were hunted down like wild beasts by the roving Bedouins. Though order was now restored, it was no easy matter to obtain camels. It required all the power and persuasion of the authorities to induce the Shukrie-Arabs to enter the town and convey us to Kedaref.

During the five days we spent at Kassala, I am happy to say that I was able to relieve many sufferers; amongst them our host himself, and one of his guests, a young, well-educated Egyptian officer, laid at death's door by a severe attack of dysentery.

On the afternoon of the 10th November we started for Kedaref. Our route now lay in a more southerly direction. On the 13th we crossed the Atbara, a tributary of the Nile, bringing to the father of rivers the waters of Northern Abyssinia. On the 17th we entered Sheik Abu Sin, the capital of the province of Kedaref.* Our came-

* From Kassala to Kedaref about 120 miles.

leers belonged to the Shukrie-Arabs. They are a semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural tribe, and reside principally in the neighbourhood of and along the course of the Atbara, or wander over the immense plains that extend almost without limit from this river to the Nile. They are more degenerated than the Beni-Amers, having mixed more with the Nubian and other tribes that dwell around them. They speak an impure Arabic. Many have retained the features and general appearance of the original race, whilst others might be looked upon as half-castes, and some can with difficulty be distinguished from the Nubians or Takrurees.

From Kassala to Kedaref we crossed interminable plains, covered with high grass, speckled here and there with woods of mimosas, too scanty to afford the slightest shade or protection during the fearful heat of the mid-day sun. Here and there on the horizon appeared a few isolated peaks; the Djbel Kassala, a few miles south of the capital of Takka. Eastward the Ela Hugel and the Abo-Gamel were in sight for many days, whilst towards the west, lost almost in the misty horizon, appeared in succession the outlines of Derkeda and Kassamot.

The valley of the Atbara, luxuriant in vegetation, inhabited by all varieties of the feathered tribe, visited by the thirsty, huge quadruped of the savannah, presented a spectacle so grand in its savage beauty that we could with difficulty tear ourselves from its shady groves, and had it not been that "Forward, forward" was our watchword, we would, braving malaria, have spent a few days near its green and fragrant banks.

At Kedaref we were lucky enough to arrive on a market-day, therefore had no difficulty in exchanging camels.

That very evening we were *en route* again, still towards the south, but this time making almost an angle with our former route, marching towards the rising sun.

Between Sabderat and Kassala, between that town and the Gash, we had for the first time seen some cultivation, but it was nothing compared to the present immense vista of cultivated fields beginning a day's journey from Sheik Abu Sin, and extending, almost without interruption, throughout the provinces of Kedaref and Galabat. Villages arise in all directions, crowning every rounded hillock. As we advance, these eminences increase in size until they disappear, to give place to hills and mountains, not united as yet, still scattered, until they melt with the uninterrupted chain of high peaks forming the Abyssinian table-land, now again, after so many days, rising before us.

We arrived at Metemma on the afternoon of the 21st of November. In the absence of Sheik Yumma, the potentate of these regions, we were received by his *alter ego*, who put one of the Imperial residences—a wretched barn—at the disposal of the "great men from England." If we deduct the seven days we were obliged to halt *en route*, on account of the difficulty we had in obtaining camels, we performed the whole journey between Massowah and Metemma, a distance of about 440 miles, in thirty days. Our journey on the whole was extremely dreary and fatiguing. Apart from a few pretty spots, such as from Ain to Haboob, the valleys of the Anseba and Atbara, and from Kedaref to Galabat, we crossed but endless savannahs, saw not a human being, not a hut—now and then only a few antelopes, or the tracks of elephants; and heard no sound but the roar of the mighty denizens of

the waste. Twice our caravan was attached by lions; unfortunately, we did not see them, as we were on both occasions riding ahead, but every night we heard their awful roar, echoing like distant thunder in the still nights of those silent prairies. The heat of the day was at times really painful. So that the camels might start in time, our tents were packed early; sometimes we would sit for hours (waiting the good pleasure of the cameleers) under the scanty shade of a mimosa, vainly endeavouring to find in its dwarfed foliage a relief from the burning rays of the sun. Night after night, be it moonlight or starlight, on we went; the task was before us, and duty, like a never-tired guide, urged us on to the land where our countrymen were lingering in chains. Often in the saddle between three and four P.M., we have jogged along on our wearied mules until the morning star had disappeared before the first rays of day. For several days we had no water but the hot and filthy fluid we carried within leather skins; and even this nauseous decoction was so scanty and precious, that we could not afford to soothe the sun-burnt skin and refresh the exhausted frame by a timely ablution.

Notwithstanding the discomfort, inconveniences—nay, danger of crossing the sand in the unhealthy season of the year, by care and attention we reached Metemma without having had a single death to lament. Several of the followers and native servants, even Mr. Rassam, suffered more or less from fever. They all eventually recovered, and when a few weeks later we started for Abyssinia, the whole party was in better health than when we left the hot and sultry shores of the Red Sea.

Metemma, the capital of Galabat, a province situated on the western frontier of Abyssinia, is built in a large valley, about four miles from the Atbara. A small rivulet runs at the foot of the village, and separates Galabat from Abyssinia. On the Abyssinian side there is a small village, inhabited by the few Abyssinian traders who reside there during the winter months, at which period a large traffic is carried on with the interior. The round, conical hut is here again the abode of all classes, the size and better state of repair being the only visible difference between the dwelling of the rich and that of his less fortunate neighbour. Sheik Yumma's palaces are inferior to many of his subjects' huts, probably to dispel the credited suspicion that he is rich, and that incalculable treasures are buried under the ground. The huts put at our disposal are, as I have already stated, his property; they are situated on one of the small hills that overlook the town; the Sheik removes there with his family during the rainy season, as it is in some degree less unhealthy than the swampy ground below.

Though following the creed of the Medina prophet, the capital of Galabat cannot boast of a single mosque.

The inhabitants of Galabat are Takruries, a negro race from Darfur. They number about 10,000; of these 2,000 reside in the capital, the remainder in the many villages that arise in all directions amidst cultivated fields and green meadows. The whole province is well adapted for agricultural purposes. Small rounded hillocks, separated by sloping valleys, watered by many rivulets, impart a pleasing aspect to the whole district; and if it was not for the extreme unhealthiness of the place, it is possible to understand the

selection made by the Darfur pilgrims, though it is no compliment paid to their own native land. The pious Darfur Mussulmans on their way to Mecca observed this favoured spot, and fancied it realized, *minus* the houris, some of the inferior Paradises of Mahommed. At last some remained; Metemma was built; other pilgrims followed the example; and soon, though a lazy and indolent race, owing to the extreme fertility of the soil, formed a prosperous colony.

In the beginning they acknowledged the Sultan of Darfur, paid him tribute, and were governed by one of his officers. But the Galabat colony soon found out that the Egyptians and Abyssinians were more to be feared than their distant sovereign, who could neither protect nor injure them; accordingly, they quietly murdered the vicerai from Darfur, and elected a Sheik from amongst themselves. The ruler at once made terms with both Egyptians and Abyssinians, and tendered yearly tribute to both. This wise but servile policy met with the best results. The colony increased and prospered, trade flourished, Abyssinians and Egyptians flocked to the well-supplied market, and the tribute of a few thousand dollars to each party fell lightly on the now rich and cunning negroes.

From November to May, on Mondays and Tuesdays, the market is held on a large open space in the centre of the village. Abyssinians bring horses, mules, cattle, and honey; the Egyptian merchant displays in his stall calico, shirtings, hardware, and gaudy prints. Arabs and Takruries arrive with camels laden with cotton and grain. The market-place is now a crowded and exciting scene. Horses are tried by half-naked jockeys, who, with whip and heel, drive at a furious pace their diminutive steeds, reckless as

to the limbs and lives of the venturous spectators. Here cotton is being loaded on donkeys, and will soon find its way to Tschelga and Gondar; here some fat Nubian girls, redolent with rancid castor-oil flowing from their woolly heads down their necks and shoulders, issue grinning from a Frank's store, holding in their hands red and yellow kerchiefs, the long-ambitioned object of their dreams. The whole scene is lively; good-humour prevails; and though the noise is fearful, the bargain long and clamorous, and every one is armed with lance or club, still, all is peaceful, and no blood is ever spilled on these occasions but that of a few cows killed for the many visitors from the high country, who enjoy their raw beefsteak under the cool shadow of the willows that border the stream.

On Friday the scene changes. On that day the whole community is seized with martial ardour. Having no mosque, the Takruries devote their holy day to ceremonies more suited to their taste, and resort to the market-place, now transformed into a parade-ground, a few to drill, the greater number to admire. Some Takruries, having served for a time in the Egyptian army, returned to their adopted land full of the value of disciplined troops, and of the superiority of muskets over lances and sticks. They prevailed on their countrymen to form a regiment on the model of "master's." Old muskets were purchased, and Sheik Yumma had the glory to see during his reign the 1st, or Yumma's Own, rise to existence. A more ludicrous sight could not, I believe, be witnessed. About a hundred flat-nosed, woolly, grinning negroes march around the parade-ground, Indian file, out of step, for about ten minutes. Line is then formed, but not being as yet well up to the proper value

of the words of command, half face on one side, half on the other. Still the crowd admires; white teeth are displayed from ear to ear. The yellow-eyed monsters now feel confident that with such support nothing is impossible, and no sooner is "stand at ease" proclaimed, than the spectators rush forward to admire more closely, and to congratulate, the future heroes of Metemma.

Sheik Yumma is an ugly specimen of an ugly race, about sixty years of age, tall and lank, wrinkled face, with a few grey patches on the chin, very black; the owner of a nose so flat that it requires time to see that he has one at all. Generally drunk, he spends the greater part of the year carrying the tribute either to the Abyssinian Lion, or to his other master the Pasha of Kartoum. A few days after our arrival at Metemma he returned from Abyssinia, and politely paid us a visit, accompanied by a motley and howling train of followers. We returned his call; but he had got drunk in the interval, and was at least uncivil, if not positively rude.

During our stay we had occasion to witness the great yearly festival of the re-election of the Sheik. Early in the morning a crowd of Takruries came pouring in from all directions, all armed with sticks or spears, a few mounted, the majority on foot, all howling and screeching (I believe they call it singing), so that before even the dust raised by a new party could be seen, the ear was deafened by their clamour. Every Takruri warrior—that is, everyone who can howl and carry a bludgeon or lance—is entitled to a vote; for this privilege he pays a dollar. The polling consists in counting the money; the amount decides the ruler's fate. The re-elected Sheik (such was the result of

the election we witnessed) killed cows, supplied jowaree loaves, and, above all, immense jars of merissa (a kind of sour toast and water, intoxicating for all that), and feasted for two days the whole body of the electors. It is difficult to say which of the two is out of pocket, the elector or the Sheik. There is no doubt that every Takrûri will eat and drink to the full amount of his dollar; is content with paying his homage, and wishes to have the worth of his money. Bribery is unknown! The drums, the sign of royalty, have been silent for three days (during the interregnum), but the cows are no sooner slaughtered and the merissa handed round by black maidens or fair Galla slaves, than their monotonous beat is again heard, soon to be drowned under the howling chorus of two thousand intoxicated negroes.

The following morning the whole assembled "by orders" on a place some distance from the town. Arranged in a large crescent, Sheik Yumma addressed his warriors in these words: "We are a strong and mighty people, unequalled in horsemanship and in the use of the club and the spear!" Moreover (said he), they had increased their power by adopting the system of firearms, the real strength of the Turks. He was all-confident that the very sight of their gunmen would strike terror into every neighbouring tribe. He ended by proposing a raid into Abyssinia, and said: "We will take cows, slaves, horses, and mules, and please our master the great Theodorus by plundering his enemy Tirsat Gobaze!" A wild *feu de joie*, but a terrible roar, from the excited crowd, informed the old Sheik that his proposal was accepted. That very same afternoon they started on their expedition, and probably surprised some

peaceful district, as they returned after a few days, driving before them several thousand head of cattle.

Metemma, from May to November, is very unhealthy. The principal diseases are continued, remittent, and intermittent fevers, diarrhœa, and dysentery. The Takruries are a tough race, and resist well the noxious influences of the climate, but not so the Abyssinian or white man; the first is almost certain to die should he attempt to spend the dreaded months in the malarious low country, the second most probably will suffer much in health, but resist for a season or two. During our stay, I had many demands for medicine. Large, cake-like spleens were greatly reduced by local applications of tincture of iodine, the internal administration of small doses of quinine and iodine of potassium. Chronic diarrhœa yielded readily to a few doses of castor oil, followed by opium and tannic acid. Acute and chronic dysentery was treated by ipecacuanha, followed by astringents. One of my patients was the son and heir of the Sheik. He had been suffering for the last two years from chronic dysentery; and although under my care he entirely recovered, his ungrateful father never even thanked me for all my trouble. Simple ophthalmia, skin diseases, and glandular swellings were also common.

The Takruries have no knowledge whatever of medicine; charms are here, as throughout the Soudan, the great remedy. They are also used as preventatives to keep off the evil eye, bad spirits, and genii of sorts; for these reasons almost every individual—nay, cattle, mules, and horses, are covered with amulets of all shapes and sizes.

The day after our arrival at Metemma we despatched two messengers with a letter to the Emperor Theodorus,

to inform him that we had reached Metemma, the place he had himself fixed upon, and were only waiting for his permission to proceed to his presence. We feared that the fickle despot might change his mind, and leave us for an unlimited period in the unhealthy Galabat. More than a month had elapsed, and we were giving way to despair, when, to our great joy, on the 25th of December (1865), the messengers we had despatched on our arrival, also those sent from Massowah at the time of our departure, returned, bringing for us civil and courteous answers from his Majesty. Sheik Yumma was also ordered by his Abyssinian master to treat us well, and to provide us with camels up to Wachnee. At that village, his Majesty informed us, we should be met by an escort and by some of the King's officers, by whom arrangements would be made to convey our luggage to the Imperial camp.

Heartily sick of Metemma, and longing to climb the high range so long a forbidden barrier to our hopes and wishes, we soon made our preparations, but were delayed a few days on account of the camels. Sheik Yumma, probably proud of his late achievements, seemed to take his orders pretty coolly, and, had we not been more anxious ourselves to penetrate into the tiger's den than the Sheik to comply with the King's request, we should no doubt have remained many a day longer at the court of that negro potentate. By dint of courteous messages, promises, and threats, the required number of camels was at last forthcoming, so that, on the afternoon of the 28th December, 1865, we passed the Ethiopic Rubicon, and halted for the night on Abyssinian ground. On the morning of the 30th we arrived at Wochnee, and pitched our tents under

some sycamores at a short distance from the village. This, our first stage in Abyssinia, led us through woods of mimosas, acacias, and incense-trees; the undulating ground, waving like the ocean after a storm, was covered with high and still green grass. As we advanced, the ground became more irregular and broken, and we crossed several ravines, having each its small running rivulet of crystal water. By-and-bye the rounded hillocks acquired a more abrupt and steep appearance; the grass no longer tall and green, but fine and dry; the sycamore, the cedar, and large timber-trees began to appear. As we approached Wochnèe, our route was a succession of ascents and descents more precipitous and fatiguing, as we trudged through deep ravines and climbed the almost perpendicular sides of the first range of the Abyssinian mountains. At Wochnee we found no one to welcome us. The cameleers, having unladen their camels, were going to depart, when a servant of one of the officers sent to receive us by his Majesty arrived. He brought us compliments from his master, who could not join us for a few days, as he was collecting bearers; he told us that we must proceed another stage by the camels, as no bearers could be obtained in the district of Wochnee. A serious altercation then took place between the Governor of Wochnee and the cameleers. They declined to proceed any further, and after a short consultation between themselves, each man seized his camel and walked away. But the Governor and the officer's servant had also been consulting together: seeing the cameleers departing, they went to the village, and, as it happened to be market-day, soon collected a good number of soldiers and peasants. As the cameleers were passing

close to the village, on a given signal the whole of the camels were seized. I regret to say, for the honour of the Arabs and Takruries, that, though well armed, they did not show fight—on the contrary, ran away in every direction. Unwilling to lose their precious beasts of burden, the owners returned by twos and threes. More consultations followed; at last, on the promise of an extra dollar for each, and a cow for all, peace and harmony were satisfactorily restored. After a couple of hours' march, we reached Ballaca. I can understand the difficulties the cameleers raised, as the road is exceedingly bad for camels, passing over two high and steep mountains covered with tall bambans.

At Ballaca we encamped in a small natural enclosure, formed by beautiful foliaged trees. Three days after our arrival, two of the officers sent by Theodorus to meet us at last made their appearance; but no bearers. We had unfortunately arrived during the last days of the long feast before Christmas, and we must, said the chief of the escort, have patience till the feast was over.

On the 6th January about twelve hundred peasants were assembled, but the confusion was so great that no start could be made before the following day, and even then we only made the short stage of four miles. The greater part of the heavy baggage was left behind, and it required a reinforcement from Tschelga to allow us to proceed on our journey. On the 9th we made a better stage, and halted for the night on a small plateau opposite the high hill fort of Zer Amba.

We were now fairly in the mountains, and had often to dismount to descend some precipitous declivity, won-

dering how our mules could climb the opposite steep, wall-like ascent. On the 10th the same awful road, only worse and worse as we advanced; and when at last we had ascended the almost perpendicular precipice that leads to the Abyssinian plateau itself, and admired the grand vista that lay at our feet, we congratulated ourselves as much upon having at last reached the land of promise, as for not tumbling into the fearful chasm below. We halted a few miles from the market town of Tschelga, at a place called Wali Dabba. Here we had to exchange bearers, and consequently to wait several days till the new ones arrived, or anything like order could be introduced. From that day my troubles began.

I was at all hours of the day surrounded by an importuning crowd, of all ages and sexes, afflicted by the many ills that flesh is heir to. I had no more privacy, and no more rest. Did I leave our camp with my gun in search of game, a clamorous crowd followed me. On the march, at every halt from Wali Dabba to the King's camp in Damot, I heard nothing else from sunrise to sunset but the incessant cries of "*Abiet, abiet; medanite, medanite.*"* I did my best; I attended at any hour of the day those who would benefit from a few doses of medicine. But this did not satisfy the great majority, composed of old syphilitic cases, nor the leper, nor those suffering from elephantiasis, the epileptic, the scrofulous, or those who had been mutilated at the hands of the

* "Lord Master, English medicine."

cruel Gallas. Day after day the crowd of patients increased; those who had met with refusal remained in the hope that, another day, the "akim's" boxes of unheard-of medicine might be opened for them also. New ones daily poured in. The many cures of simple cases that I had been able to accomplish spread my fame far and wide, and even reached my countrymen at Magdala, who heard that an English *akim* had arrived, who could break bones and instantly set them, so that the individual operated upon walked away like the paralytic in Holy Writ. At last the nuisance became intolerable, and I was obliged to keep my tent closed all day long; when I left it for the most necessary purpose I was surrounded by an admiring crowd. The officers of the escort were obliged to place a guard round my tent, and only allowed their relatives and friends to approach. Still, these were often countless, and it was not till the dread of the despot overcame even their love of life and health that successful and unsuccessful postulants returned to their homes.

On the 13th January we began our march towards the King's camp, and passed successively through the provinces of Tschelga, part of Dembea, Dagossa, Wainadega, Agau-Medar, and Damot, leaving the Tana Sea on our left. The three first-named provinces had a few years before fallen under the wrath of the despot; every village had been burnt, every crop destroyed. The inhabitants had either perished from famine or been absorbed into the Imperial army. A few had just then returned to their broken-down homes, on hearing of the pardon proclaimed by the Emperor, who, after three years, had relented, and allowed those who still wandered in distant provinces,

destitute and homeless, to return again to the land of their fathers. Here and there, amongst the ruins of former prosperous villages, some half-starved, almost naked peasants were seen erecting small sheds on the ashes of their ancestral huts, near the land they were going again to cultivate. Alas, they knew not how soon the same merciless hand would be stretched upon them! Atshafeur had also been plundered at the same date, but their "crime" not having been so great, the "father of his people" had been content to strip them of all their property, and did not call fire in aid to complete his vengeance. The villages of Atshafeur are large and well built; some, such as Limajur, can rank with small towns; but the people had a poor and miserable appearance. The small amount of cultivation indicated but too plainly that they expected another plunder, and just tilled the soil enough to meet their immediate wants.

The Agau Medars were always pets of the Emperor; he never plundered them, or, what is the same, he never made any lengthened friendly stay among them. The rich and abundant harvest ready for the sickle, the numerous herds of cattle grazing in the flower-speckled meadows, the large and neat villages, the happy look of the peasants, clearly proved what Abyssinia can do for its children when their rich and fertile soil is not laid waste by wanton destruction, and themselves driven by warfare and bloodshed to perish with misery and hunger on their way to strange lands.

The King's camp was at this time in Damot. He had already burnt, plundered, and slaughtered to his heart's content; it is therefore not astonishing that from Agau to

his camp we saw, apart from our escort and bearers, not a human being, no sleek cattle, no smiling hamlet—a dire contrast to the happy Agau that "St. Michael protects."

The 25th of January was our last stage. We had halted the night before at a short distance from the Imperial camp. The black and white tents of Theodorus, pitched on a high conical hill, stood out in bold relief as the setting sun made the dark background darker still. A faint, distant hum, such as one hears on approaching a large city, came now and then to us, carried by the soft evening breeze, and the smoke that arose for miles around the dark hill, crowned by its silent tents, left us no doubt that we should before long find ourselves face to face with the African despot, and that we were even then almost in the midst of his countless host. As we approached, messenger after messenger came to meet us; we had to halt several times, march on again for a while, and then halt anew; at last the chief of the escort told us that it was time to dress. A small rowtie was accordingly pitched; we put on our uniforms, and, mounting again, we had hardly proceeded a hundred yards, when, coming to a sudden turn in the road, we saw displayed before us one of those Eastern scenes which brought back to our memory the days of Lobo and of Bruce. A conical wooded hill, opposite to the one honoured by the Imperial tents, was covered to the very summit by the gunners and spearmen of Theodorus, all in gala dress, clad in shirts of rich coloured silks; the black, brown, or red shama falling from their shoulders; the bright iron of the lances shining like so many stars as the midday sun poured its rays through the dark foliage of the cedars. In the valley be-

tween the hills a large body of cavalry, about 10,000 strong, formed a double line, between which we advanced. On our right, dressed in gorgeous array, almost all bearing the silver shield and the Bitwa, the horses adorned with richly-plated bridles, stood the whole of the officers of his Majesty's army and household, the governors of provinces and of districts, &c. All were mounted, some on really noble-looking animals, tribute from the plateaux of Gedjars and the highlands of the Shoa. On our left, the corps of cavalry was darker, but more compact, than its aristocratic *vis-à-vis*. The horses, though on the whole, perhaps, less graceful, were strong and in good condition; and seeing their iron ranks, we could well undertand how thunderstricken the poor scattered peasants must be when Theodorus, at the head of the well-armed and well-mounted band of ruthless followers, suddenly appears among their peaceful homes, and, before his very presence is suspected, has come, destroyed, and gone. In the centre opposite to us stood Ras Engeddah, the Prime Minister, distinguished from all by his gentlemanly appearance and the great simplicity of his attire. Bareheaded, the shama girded in token of respect, he delivered the Imperial message of welcome, translated into Arabic by Samuel, who stood by him, and whose finely-chiselled features and intellectual countenance at once proclaimed his superiority over the ignorant Abyssinian. Compliments delivered, Ras and ourselves mounted, and advanced towards the Imperial tents, preceded by the body of mounted grandees, and followed by the cavalry. Arrived at the foot of the hill, we dismounted, and were conducted to a small red flannel tent pitched for our reception on the ascent itself. There

we rested for a while, and partook of a slight collation. Towards three o'clock we were informed that the Emperor would receive us; we ascended the hill on foot, escorted by Samuel and several other officers of the Imperial household. As soon as we reached the small plateau on the summit, an officer brought us renewed greetings and compliments from his Majesty. We advanced slowly towards the beautiful durbar-tent of red and yellow silk, between a double line of gunners, who, on a signal, fired a salute very creditable to their untaught skill. Arrived at the entrance of the tent, the Emperor again inquired after our health and welfare. Having acknowledged with due respect his courteous inquiries, we advanced towards the throne, and delivered into his hands the letter from Her Majesty the Queen. The Emperor received it civilly, and told us to sit down on the splendid carpets that covered the ground. The Emperor was seated on an alga, wrapped up to the eyes in a shama, the sign of greatness and of power in Abyssinia. On his right and left stood four of his principal officers, clad in rich and gay silks, and behind him watched one of his trusty familiars, holding a double-barrelled pistol in each hand. The King made a few complaints about the European prisoners, and regretted that by their conduct they had interrupted the friendship formerly existing between the two nations. He was happy to see us, and hoped that all would be well again. After a few compliments had been exchanged, on the plea that we must be tired, having come so far, we were allowed to depart. We remained with the Emperor from the 28th of January to the 5th of February. During that period we were treated with the utmost courtesy, had the honour of

several private interviews, and were abundantly supplied with bread, sheep, cows, and money.

His Majesty accompanied us several stages towards the Tana Sea, as Kourata had been fixed upon as our place of residence until the arrival of our countrymen from Magdala. On the first day's march we were left behind, on account of our luggage, and had a good opportunity of experiencing what it is to travel with an Abyssinian army. The fighting men were in front with the King, but the camp followers (numbering on that occasion about 250,000), encumbered as they were with the tents and provisions of the soldiers, came more slowly behind. It is almost impossible to describe the crush and confusion that frequently take place—for example, when a small river has to be forded, or when a single footpath leads along a steep incline of almost naked rocks. Thousands heaped together push, scream, and vainly endeavour to penetrate the living wall, always increasing as the mules and donkeys get more frightened, and the muddy banks of the stream more slippery and broken. Several times, driven to despair by several hours of patient waiting, we departed in search of another road or some other ford where the crush and crowd might be less. It was only late in the afternoon that we reached our encamping ground. We had been the whole day upon a march that the Emperor accomplished in an hour and a-half. The King, having heard to what inconvenience we had been put, had the heavy luggage conveyed as before; but ourselves, with a few light articles, were allowed the privilege of riding with him in front of the army. During the few days his Majesty accompanied us we made but short stages, never more than ten miles

a-day. Theodorus travelled with us for several reasons: he wanted to take us by a short cut by the Tana Sea, and as the country was depopulated, he was obliged to have our luggage carried by his soldiers. He had not as yet plundered that part of Damot; the inhabitants had fled, but the harvest ready for the sickle remained, and at a sign from the Emperor was reaped by thousands. Whilst the greater part of his soldiers were thus employed, and practically the sword was used as an instrument of peace, the King, with a large body of cavalry, left the camp, and shortly afterwards the smoke that arose far and wide proclaimed their merciless errand.

On the 6th of March his Majesty sent us word to depart. We did not see him, but before we left he sent us a letter informing us that as soon as the prisoners joined us he would take steps to send us out of his country in "honour and safety." The officer ordered to proceed to Magdala to deliver the captives, and conduct them to us, was one of our escort; we were the bearers of an humble apology from Theodorus to our Queen; all smiled upon us; and rejoiced beyond expression by the apparently complete success of our mission, we retraced our steps with a light and thankful heart through the plains of Agau Medar. On the afternoon of the 10th of February, we encamped on the shore of the Tana Sea, a large fresh-water lake, the reservoir of the Blue Nile. The river enters at the south-west extremity of the lake, and issues again at its south-east extremity, the two branches being only separated by the promontory of Zagay.

The spot we pitched our camp upon was at the south-west extremity of the lake, in the district of Howsige,

Kourata being almost opposite to us, bearing N.N.E. We had to wait several days while boats were constructed for ourselves, escort, and luggage. These boats—the most primitive construction of the kind still in existence—are made of bulrushes, the papyrus of the ancients. The bulrushes are tied together so as to form a flat surface some six feet in breadth and from ten to twenty feet in length. The two extremities are then rolled up and tied together. The passengers and boatmen sit upon a large square bundle of bulrushes—the essential part of the boat, which the outward cage serves only to keep in place, and by its pointed extremities to favour progression. To say that these boats leak is a misnomer; they are always full of water, or rather, like a piece of cork, always half submerged. Their floating is simply a question of specific gravity. The manner in which the boats are propelled adds certainly to the already great discomfort of the traveller. Two men sit in front, one behind. They use long sticks, instead of oars, beating the water alternately to the right and left; at each stroke they send in front and from behind a regular shower-bath, and the unfortunate occupant of the boat, who had beforehand taken off his shoes and stockings and well tucked up his trousers, finds that he would have been wiser had he adopted a more simple costume still, and followed the example of the naked boatmen.

The Abyssinian Navy does not weigh heavily on the estimates, nor does it take years to construct a fleet; two days after our arrival fifty new vessels had been launched, and several hundreds had joined from Zagay and the Isle of Dek.

The few days we spent on the shore of the Tana Sea were among the few happy ones we have seen in this country. Samuel, now our balderabog (introducer) and chief of the escort, did not allow the former crowds to invade my tent. Samuel is an intelligent man withal, and his relatives and friends being less numerous than those of his predecessor, he only brought to me those he knew would benefit by a few doses of medicine, or those he was compelled to introduce, as by refusing the petty chiefs and important men of the several neighbouring districts he would have made serious enemies. It was now a recreation instead of a fatigue—a pleasure to study the diseases of the country, a thing quite impossible before, when I could only defend myself against the importunities of a crowd, and could not in peace examine a single case. The remainder of my time was spent in shooting. Aquatic birds, ducks, geese, &c., were in abundance—so tame that the survivors did not move away, but remained bathing, feeding, and cleaning their bright feathers around the dead bodies of their mates and companions.

On the morning of the 16th we started for Dek, the largest and most important island of the Tana Lake; it is situated about half-way from our starting-place and Kourata. We were shower-bathed for about six hours; our speed was about two and a-half knots, so that the distance must be about fifteen miles. Dek is a very pretty island indeed—a long, flat volcanic rock, surrounded by conical hillocks, forming so many island pearls around a coronet. The whole island is well wooded, covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, dotted with numerous and prosperous villages, and proudly boasts of four old and

revered churches—the shrines of many devoted pilgrims. We spent the night in the heart of the picturesque island —the ideal of an earthly abode. Alas! we knew only some time afterwards that the passage of the white men caused but tears and distress among the Arcadian inhabitants of that peaceful land. The inhabitants of the island had been ordered to supply us with 10,000 dollars. The chiefs, almost despairing of being able to raise so large a sum, made a powerful appeal to their friends and neighbours; painted in but too true colours the wrath of the despot should he learn that his request had not been complied with, and the wilderness that would replace their rich and happy isle. The eloquence of some, the threats of others, were equally successful. All the savings of years were brought to the chiefs. Silver rings and chains —the dower and fortune of many a young maiden—were added to the newly-spun shama of the matron. All were reduced to poverty. All were trembling, though they smiled whilst making the sacrifice of all their worldly goods. How they must have cursed, from the bitterness of their grief, the poor white strangers, the innocent cause of all their misfortunes!

The following morning we started for Kourata, the distance and inconvenience being about the same as on the preceding day. Once again on *terra firma*, we hailed with unmitigated delight the end of our short and disagreeable passage. On the beach we were received by the clergy, who had turned out in full canonicals to welcome us, with all the pomp usually accorded only to royalty; but such had been the royal command. Two of the wealthiest merchants of the place claimed us as their guests, in the

name of their royal master, and, mounted on beautiful mules, we ascended the hill on which Kourata is built, the privilege of riding through the sacred streets having been conferred on the honoured guests of the sovereign of the land.

Kourata is, after Gondar, the most important and wealthy city of Abyssinia—a town of priests and merchants, built on the sides of a conical hill, and bathed by the shores of the Tana Sea. The houses, many of them built of stone, are superior to any we saw in Abyssinia. The church erected by the Queen of Socinius is held in such sanctity that the whole town is considered sacred, and none but the Bishop or the Emperor are allowed to ride through its narrow and steep lanes. From the sea it is almost impossible to see the town, so close and compact are the towering dark cedars and sycamores—the just pride of the inhabitants. The whole hillock is so completely covered with vegetation of every description, that the spot from a distance seems more like a luxuriant waste, untouched by man's hand, than the abode of thousands, the central mart of Western Abyssinia. For a few days we resided in the town, where several of the best houses had been put at our disposal; but the countless host of "unmentionables" fairly drove us away. We obtained permisison to pitch our tents on the sea beach, on a pleasant spot only a few hundred yards from the town, where we enjoyed the double luxury of fresh air and abundance of water.

We remained at Kourata from the 14th of February to the 13th of April. During that period I attended on a great many patients; but here, even more than on the road

from Damot, there was no crush, no crowd of helpless cases. Before and after breakfast the interpreter conducted to my tent all those sent by Samuel, and I only visited in the town those too sick to leave their homes.

Game was very abundant; for a long time we killed ducks from our tents, and when at last the birds got shy of the place, we were always certain during our afternoon walk to make a good bag; geese, ducks, guinea-fowls, woodcocks, snipes, or gazelles never failed, some or all, to keep our table well supplied.

On the 12th of March the Magdala captives arrived; others who had remained as semi-prisoners at Gaffat, and who had obtained permission to leave the country, also joined us. The European workmen of his Majesty had some time before, by order of the Emperor, come to reside near us. His Majesty had sent them, with their families, as he said, to keep us company, so that we should not be lonely in his country. All appeared to be progressing very favourably. It is true now and then a few ruffles appeared on the smooth waters of our good fortune, such as the request that the prisoners should be tried before they left the country, and declare before us whether they were guilty or not; or the demand for workmen, coupled with the wish that we should remain in the country until they arrived. But now all fears seem dispelled, and all obstacles finally removed. We were building castles in the air; seeing dear friendly faces once more. Homeward bound, we laughed at the scorching heat of the hottest month, when all our plans, hopes, and expectations were suddenly and cruelly crushed!

On the 13th of April we made our third experiment of

the bulrush boats (we had once during our stay at Kourata gone over to Zagay to spend a day with his Majesty), as the Emperor desired once more to see his dear friends before they left. The European workmen of Gaffat accompanied us. All the Magdala and Gaffat prisoners started the same day, but by another route; the whole party was to rendezvous at Tankal, near the north-west extremity of the lake, where the luggage was also to be conveyed by boats.

On our arrival at Zagay, we were received with the usual marks of respect. Ras Engedda and several high officers came to meet us on the beach, and richly-harnessed mules were provided for us by the royal stables. We dismounted at the entrance of his Majesty's enclosure, and were conducted at once to the large audience-hall, erected quite close to the Emperor's private fence. On entering, we were surprised to see the large hall lined on both sides by Abyssinian officers in their gala dress. The throne had been placed at the extremity of the hall, but was empty, and the large circular space around it was filled with the highest officers of the realm. We had only advanced a few stages, preceded by Ras Engedda, when he bowed and kissed the ground, we thought out of respect for the throne, but it was again on this, as on a more memorable occasion, a kiss that was the signal of a mean treachery. No sooner had the Ras prostrated himself, than nine men, posted for the purpose, rushed upon each of us, and in less time than I can express it our swords, belts, and caps were cast to the ground, our uniforms torn, and the officers of the English mission, seized by the arm and neck, were dragged to the upper part of

the hall, degraded and reviled before the whole of Theodorus' courtiers and grandees!

We were allowed to sit down, our captors sitting next to us. The Emperor did not appear, but questions were brought to us by the Ras Cantiba Hailo (the Emperor's adopted father), Samuel, and the European workmen. The questions asked by his Majesty were, to say the least, childish. Why have you not brought the prisoners to me? Why have you given them firearms? Did you not come with a friendly letter from the Queen of England? Why have you sent letters to the coast? and such like rubbish. Many of the highest officers several times expressed openly their approval of the answers—a rare proceeding in an Abyssinian Court. They evidently did not like, nor could they justify, the treacherous conduct of their master. Between the questions a paper was partially read, referring to his Majesty's pedigree. As it had nothing to do with our alleged crime, I could not understand its purport, except that it was a certain weakness of this patrician to glory in his supposed ancestors.

The assembly having been dismissed, we waited a little while, whilst a tent was pitched for us near the Emperor's enclosure. At the time we were undergoing our trial, all the luggage we had brought with us was personally examined by his Majesty. All arms, money, papers, knives, &c., were confiscated; the remainder sent to us after we had been escorted to the tent. We had hardly entered our new abode, and had not yet recovered from our surprise at the turn the Abyssinian *imbroglio* had just taken, when cows and bread in abundance were sent to us by his Majesty—a strange contrast to his recent dealings

towards us. The following day we heard that our unfortunate countrymen had been seized a few miles from Kourata, put in chains, and were on their way to Zagay. On the 16th they arrived.

On the 17th we received a message from his Majesty, telling us to go to him, as he desired to try before us the Europeans who had, he said, formerly insulted him. Theodorus knows well how to make a display. On this occasion he did his utmost to impress all, Europeans as well as natives, with an idea of his power and greatness. He was seated on an alga in the open air, in front of the audience-hall. All the great officers of state were stationed on his left hand in front; on his right the Europeans, and around these more important individuals the petty chiefs and soldiers formed an almost complete circle.

As soon as we approached, his Majesty rose and saluted us—received us, in short, as though we were still his honoured guests, and not the heralds from a great Power he had recently so grossly insulted. We were told to sit down. A few minutes of silence followed, and we saw advancing from the outer gate our countrymen, guarded as criminals, and chained two by two. They were arranged in a line in front of his Majesty, who, after observing them for a few seconds, "kindly" inquired after their health, and how they had spent their time. The captives acknowledged these compliments by repeatedly kissing the ground before that incarnation of the Evil One, who all the time grinned in delight at the sight of the misery and humiliation of his victims. Captain Cameron's and Mr. Bardell's fetters were then opened, and they were told to

come and sit down near us. The Emperor's pedigree was first read; from Adam to David all went on smoothly enough; from Solomon's supposed son Messilek to Socinius few names were given, but perhaps they were patriarchs in their own way; but when it came to Theodorus' father and mother the difficulty increased, indeed, became serious; many witnesses were brought forward to testify to their royal descent, and even the opinion of the puppet Emperor Saharius was recorded in favour of Theodorus' legal right to the throne of his ancestors. After that the trial of the captives began; their supposed crimes are well known, and as the present trial was only a repetition of the one of Gondar, it would be only a mere waste of time to speak of it here; suffice it to say that these unfortunate and injured men answered with all humility and meekness, and endeavoured by so doing to avert the wrath of the wretch in whose power they were. Their trial ended, we were called forward, and the scene of the 18th acted over again. In conclusion, his Majesty said, addressing himself to us, "Wherever I go, you will go; wherever I stay, you will stay." On that we were dismissed to our tents, and Captain Cameron was allowed to accompany us. The other Europeans, still in chains, were sent to another part of the camp, where several weeks before a fence had been erected, no one knew why.

The following day we were again called before his Majesty, but this time it was quite a private affair. The prisoners were brought in; the Emperor bowed his head to the ground, and begged their pardon; they asked for his. The reconciliation effected, the Emperor dictated a letter for our Queen, and Mr. Flad was selected to convey

it. The audience over, the prisoners were brought to our tents, and their chains opened. We then all had our tents pitched in a large enclosure fenced that very morning under his Majesty's supervision. We were once more all mixed, but this time all prisoners. Flad left; we expected that his mission would be unsuccessful, and that England, disgusted with so much treachery, would not condescend to treat further, but enforce her commands.

Zagay was one of the principal towns of the formerly prosperous and populous district of Metsha, but when we came we saw nought but ruins; and had we not been told that the guicho and coffee covered hill was only a few weeks before the abode of thousands, we could not have credited it, no more than that the small circular patches, now green with grass and weeds, had been the homes of a thriving and industrious population.

A few days after the reconciliation—the very morning Flad left for England—his Majesty returned us our arms, and a portion of our money; he also presented us at the same time with silver-mounted shields, spears, and mules, a few days later with horses. We saw him on several occasions; twice he came to see us in our tents; one day we went with him to assist at the trial of some guns made by his European workmen; once duck-shooting with him on the lake; another time to see him play the national game of goucks. He endeavoured to appear friendly, supplied us with abundant rations, twice a-day sent his compliments, even fired a salute, and gave a feast on our Queen's birthday. Nevertheless, we felt unhappy; our cage was gilt, but still a cage; and the experience we had had of the King's treachery made us constantly fear a recurrence of

the same when we met him in Damot. When we visited him before at Zagay, we had only seen the actor in his smiling mood; now all restraint was over, women were flogged to death close to our tents, soldiers laden with chains or beaten to death on the most trivial pretexts. The true character of the tyrant became daily more apparent, and we felt that our position was most dangerous and crititical.

Cholera had been making havoc in Tigraz; we were not surprised, therefore, to hear that it had spread over other provinces, and that several cases had already broken out at Kourata.

The King's camp was pitched in a very unhealthy situation, on a low, swampy ground; fevers, diarrhœa, and dysentery had prevailed to a great extent. Informed of the approach of cholera, his Majesty wisely decided upon moving his camp to the highlands of Begunder. Mrs. Rosenthal was at the time very unwell, and could not stand the journey by land; she was therefore allowed to procced by water to Kourata, accompanied by her husband, myself, and Captain Cameron, also in delicate health. We started on the evening of the 31st of May, and reached Kourata early the next morning. A gale of wind was blowing at the time, and we had to make frequent stoppages on the lee of the land, as the heavy sea frequently threatened to swamp our frail boats. Without exaggeration, this last passage was in all respects the *ne plus ultra* of discomfort any one could be put to.

At Kourata a few empty houses were put at our disposal; and as it was rumoured that the Emperor intended to spend the rainy season in the neighbourhood, we went

to work to make the dirty native houses inhabitable. On the 6th of June his Majesty left Zagay with his army; Mr. Rassam and the other prisoners accompanied him; all the heavy baggage had been sent by boat to Kourata. On the the 9th, his Majesty encamped on a low promontory south of Kourata. Cholera had by this time broken out in the camp, and hundreds were dying daily. In the hope of improving the sanitary condition of the army, the Emperor moved his camp to some high ground, a mile or so north of the town, but the epidemic continued to rage with great virulence, both in the camp and in the town. The church was so completely choked up with dead bodies that no more could be admitted, and the adjoining streets offered the sad sight of countless corpses, surrounded by the sorrowful relatives, awaiting for days and nights the hallowed grave in the now crowded cemetery. Small-pox and typhus fever also made their appearance, and claimed the victims cholera had spared.

On the 12th June we received orders to join the camp, as his Majesty intended to leave on the following day for the higher and more healthy province of Begemder. On the 13th, at early morning, the camp was struck, and we encamped in the evening on the banks of the Gumara, a tributary of the Nile. The next day the march was resumed. We had been more or less amending since our departure from Kourata and Outva (a beautiful plateau). Our halting-place of the 14th must have been several thousand feet higher than the lake, nevertheless cholera, small-pox, and typhus fever continued unabated. His Majesty inquired what was usually done in our country under similar circumstances. We advised him to proceed at once

to the higher plateau of Begemder, to leave his sick on the side of Debra Tabor, and to break up as far as possible his army, and distribute it over the whole province, selecting a few healthy and isolated localities where every fresh case that broke out should be sent. His Majesty acted upon this advice, and before long had the satisfaction of seeing the several epidemics lose their virulence, and, before several weeks, disappear entirely. On the 16th we made a very long march. We started at about 6 A.M. and never halted once until we arrived at Debra Tabor at about 2 P.M. As soon as we reached the foot of the hill on which the Imperial houses arise, we received a message from his Majesty telling us not to dismount, and shortly afterwards he rode towards us, accompanied by a few of his body-guard. We all started for Gaffat, the European station, about three miles east of Debra Tabor. *En route* we were overtaken by the most severe hailstorm I have ever seen or experienced; such was its violence, that his Majesty was several times obliged to halt. The hail poured down in such thick masses, and the stones were of such an enormous size, that it was indeed quite painful to bear. At last we reached Gaffat, frozen and drenched to the skin; but his Majesty, seemingly quite unaffected by the recent shower, acted as our cicerone, and took us about the place, explaining to us the foundry, workshops, water-wheels, &c. A few planks were transformed into seats, and a fire lighted by his order, and we remained with him alone for more than three hours, discussing the laws and customs of England. Some carpets and cushions had been left behind at Debra Tabor, and he sent back Ras Engeddah to have them conveyed as soon as he returned

with the bearers. His Majesty led the way up the hill to Gaffat, and with his own hands spread the carpets, and placed the throne in the house selected for Mr. Rassam. Other houses were distributed to the other Europeans, after which his Majesty left.

On the 17th June the European workmen, who had remained behind at Kourata, arrived at Debra Tabor. We are not aware that they made any objection to our occupying their houses, but his Majesty perceived by their demeanour that they were not pleased; he therefore accompanied them to Gaffat, and in a few hours had the foundry, by means of shama, gabit, and carpets, transformed into a very decent abode. The throne was also conveyed there, and when all was ready we were called. His Majesty, after apologizing for the accommodation he was obliged to give us for a few days, returned to Debra Tabor, promising that the next day he would see for a more suitable dwelling for his guests. Accordingly, the following morning his Majesty arrived, and had several native houses on a small hill opposite Gaffat cleared out for our reception. As Mr. Rassam's house was rather small, he took advantage of the circumstance to request that his Majesty would withdraw the honour of placing the throne in his room. His Majesty acquiesced, but had the place well carpeted, and the walls and ceiling lined with white cloth. After all these daily changes, we thought that we were settled for the rainy season. Cholera and typhus fever had made their appearance at Gaffat, and from morning to night I was in constant attendance on the sick. One of my patients, the wife of one of the Europeans, greatly occupied my time: she had first been at-

tacked with cholera, and was afterwards laid for many days at death's door with typhus fever.

On the morning of the 25th of June we received a message from the Emperor, to the effect that Mr. Rassam, his companions, the priests, and any one he would like to take with him, should repair to Debra Tabor, to be present at a political trial. The European workmen, Cantiba Hailo, and Samuel accompanied us. Arrived at Debra Tabor, we were surprised at not being received with the usual salutation. Instead of being at once conducted to the presence of the Emperor, we were ushered into a black tent pitched in the King's enclosure. We guessed that the political trial concerned ourselves. We had been seated but a few minutes, when the European workmen were sent for by his Majesty. After a while they returned, with Cantiba Hailo, Samuel, and an Afa Negus (mouth of the King), who delivered the Imperial messages. The first and most important was, "I have received a letter from Jerusalem, in which I am told that the Turks are making railways in the Soudan, to attack my country conjointly with the English and French." The second message was much to the same effect, only adding that as Mr. Rassam must have seen the railway in construction, he ought to have informed his Majesty of it. The third question was, "Is it not true that the Egyptian railway was built by the English?" Fourthly, Did he not give a letter to Consul Cameron for him to deliver to the Queen of England, and did not the Consul return without an answer? Altogether, there were some seven or eight questions, but the others were insignificant, and I do not remember them. A few days before, a Greek priest had arrived from the coast with a letter for his Majesty:

whether these statements were contained in the missive, or were merely a pretext invented by Theodorus himself, to give a reason for the ill-treatment he intended to inflict upon his innocent guests, it is impossible to say. The concluding message was, "You must remain here; your arms his Majesty no longer trusts in your hands, but your property will be sent to you." Mr. Rosenthal obtained permission to return to Gaffat to see his wife, and I was granted leave to accompany Fannel, as Mr. Waldenuir was that day in a very critical state. Mr. Rassam and the other Europeans remained in the tent. Mr. Waldenuir, on account of his wife's serious illness, had remained at Gaffat, and he was much startled and grieved when he heard of our new misfortune, especially as it would deprive his wife of medical attendance at a time her life was despaired of. He begged me to remain near her for an hour, whilst he would gallop to Debra Tabor to entreat his Majesty to let me remain with him until his wife should be out of danger. Mrs. Waldenuir is a daughter of the late Mr. Bell, who was held in great esteem and affection by the Emperor. Not only did his Majesty at once grant Waldenuir's request, but added, that if Mr. Rassam had no objection, he would allow me to remain at Gaffat, as sickness was prevailing there, during the expedition he intended to make. As I was much reduced by chronic diarrhœa and over-exertion, I was much pleased at the prospect of remaining at Gaffat, instead of campaigning during the rains. Mr. Rassam himself the following day requested his Majesty to allow me and some of our companions to remain for the rainy season at Gaffat. In my case and in Mr. Rosenthal's,

permission was granted, but was refused to all the others.

Every day we heard that orders had been issued for the camp to be struck, but his Majesty did not leave. His Majesty daily inquired after Mrs. Waldenuir, and sent me his compliments. His Majesty visited Gaffat twice during the few days I was there, and on each occasion sent for me and received me courteously. Mr. Rassam and the other Europeans were allowed to come to Gaffat and spend the day with us; and although now and then the word "Magdala" was whispered, still it seemed as if the storm had blown over, and we hoped before long to be all again united at Gaffat, and there in peace spend the rainy season.

On the 3rd of July an official brought us the Imperial compliments, and stated that his Majesty was coming to inspect the works, and that I might present myself before him. I went at once to the foundry, and on the road I met two of the Gaffat workmen also proceeding there. A little incident then occurred, which was followed by serious consequences. We met his Majesty near the foundry, riding ahead of his escort; he asked us how we were, and we all bowed and took off our hats. As he passed along, the two Europeans with whom I walked, covered themselves; but aware how touchy his Majesty was on all points of etiquette, I kept my head uncovered, though the sun was hot and fierce. Arrived at the foundry, his Majesty again greeted me cordially; examined for a few minutes the drawing of a gun his workmen proposed to cast for him, and then left, all of us following. In the courtyard he passed close to Mr.

Rosenthal, who did not bow, as his Majesty took no notice of him. As soon as he issued from the foundry fence a poor old beggar asked for alms, saying, "My lords (gaitosh) the Europeans have always been kind to me. Oh! my king, you also relieve my distress!" His Majesty, on hearing the expression "lord" applied to his workmen, got into a fearful passion. "How dare you call any one 'lord' but myself. Beat him, beat him by my death." Two of the executioners at once rushed upon him, and began beating him with their long sticks, his Majesty all the while exclaiming, "Beat him, beat him by my death." The poor old cripple, at first in heartrending terms, implored for mercy, but his voice grew fainter and fainter, and in a few minutes more there lay his helpless corpse, that none dare remove or pray for. The laughing hyenas that night caroused undisturbed on his abandoned remains. Theodorus' rage was by no means abated by this act of cruelty; he advanced a few steps, stopped, turned, his lance in rest, looking around, the very image of ungovernable fury. His eyes fell upon Mr. Rosenthal. "Seize him!" cried he. Immediately several soldiers rushed forward to obey the Imperial command, "Seize the man they call an akim." Instantly a dozen ruffians pounced upon me, and I was held fast by the arms, coat, trousers—by every place that afforded a grip. He then addressed himself to Mr. Rosenthal. "You donkey, why did you call me the son of a poor woman? Why did you abuse me?" Mr. Rosenthal said, "If I have offended your Majesty, I beg for pardon." All the while his Majesty was shaking his lance in a threatening manner, and every minute I expected that he would throw it. I

feared that, blind with rage, he would not be able to control himself; and I well knew that if once he began to give vent to his passions, my fate was also sealed.

Fortunately for us both, he turned towards his European workmen and abused them in no measured terms. "You slaves! Have I not bought you with money? Who are you that you dare call yourselves 'lords?' Take care!" Then addressing the two I had met on the road, he said, "You are proud, are you? Slaves! Women! Rotten donkeys! you cover your head in my presence. Did you not see me? Did not the akim keep his head uncovered? Poor men that I have made rich!" He then turned towards me, and seeing me held by a dozen soldiers, he cried out, "Let him go; bring him before me." All drew back except one, who conducted me to a few feet from the Emperor. He then asked me, "Do you know Arabic?" Though I understand a little of that language, I thought it more prudent, under the circumstances, to reply in the negative. He then told Mr. Schange to translate what he was going to say. "You, akim, are my friend; I have nothing against you, but others have abused me, and you must come up with me to witness their trial." He then ordered Cantiba Hailo to give me his mule. He then mounted, I and Mr. Rosenthal following; the latter on foot, dragged the whole way by the soldiers who had first seized him. As soon as we reached Debra Tabor, the King sent word to Mr. Rassam to come out with the other Europeans, as he had something to tell him. The King sat upon a rock, about twenty yards in front of us; between him and ourselves stood a few of his high officers, and behind us a deep line

of soldiers. He was still angry, breaking the edges of the rock with the butt-end of his lance, and spitting constantly between his words. He at once addressed himself to the Rev. Mr. Stern, and asked him, "Was it as a Christian, a heathen, or a Jew, that you abused me? Tell me where you find in the Bible that a Christian ought to abuse? When you wrote your book, by whose authority did you do it? Those who abused me to you, were they my enemies or yours? Who was it told you evil things against me?" &c. He then asked Mr. Rassam whether he knew or not that Jerusalem belonged to him, and that the Abyssinian convent there had been seized by the Turks? The descendant of Constantine and Alexander the Great, India and Arabia belonged to him. He put many foolish questions of the same kind. At last he said to Samuel, who was interpreting, "What have you to say if I chain your friends?" "Nothing," replied Samuel; "are you not the master?" Chains had been brought, but the answer somewhat pacified him. He then addressed one of his chiefs, saying, "Can you watch these people in the tent?" The other, who knew his answer, replied, "Your Majesty, the house would be better." On that he gave orders for our baggage to be conveyed from the black tent to a house contiguous to his own, and we were told to go.

The house assigned to us was formerly used as a godown, built of stone, with a large verandah all around, closed by a single door, with no window or other aperture. It was only when several lighted candles had been brought that we could find our way into the dark central room. Soldiers carried our bedding, and a dozen guards sat near

us, holding lighted candles in their hands. The King sent us several messages. Mr. Rassam took advantage of the circumstance to complain bitterly of the unfair treatment inflicted upon us. He said, "Tell his Majesty that I have done my best to bring on a good understanding between my country and him; but when to-day's work is known, whatever the consequences may be, let him not throw the blame upon me." His Majesty sent back word, "If I treat you well or not, it is the same; my enemies will always say that I have ill-treated you, so it does not matter."

A little later we were rather startled by a message from his Majesty, informing us that he could not rest before comforting his friend, and that he would come and see us. Though we did our best to dissuade him from such a step, he soon afterwards came, accompanied by some slaves carrying arrack and tej. He said, "Even my wife told me not to go out, but I could not leave you in grief, so I have come to drink with you." On that he had arrack and tej presented to all of us, himself setting the example.

He was calm, and rather serious, though he made great efforts to appear gay. He must have remained at least an hour, conversing on different topics, the Pope of Rome being the principal one discussed. Amongst other things he said, "My father was mad, and though people often say that I am mad also, I never would believe it; but now I know it is true." Mr. Rassam answered, "Pray do not say such a thing." His Majesty replied, "Yes, yes, I am mad." Shortly before leaving, he said, "Do not look at my face or take heed of my words when I speak to you before my people, but look at my heart; I have an

object." As he returned, he gave orders to the guards to withdraw outside, and not to inconvenience us. Though we have seen him since then once or twice, at a distance, it is the last time we conversed with him.

The two days we spent in the black house at Debra Tabor, all huddled up together, obliged to have lighted candles day and night, anxious and uncertain about our future fate, were really days of mental torture and physical discomfort, to which, in our time, few have been subjected. We hailed with joy the announcement that we were going to move; any alternative was preferable to our position—be it rain in a worn-out tent, be it chains in one of the ambas—everything was better than close confinement, deprived of all comforts, even of the cheering light of day.

At noon on the 5th of July we were informed that his Majesty had already left, and that our escort was in attendance. All were delighted at the prospect of fresh air and green fields, and bright sun. We did not require a second command, and did not even give a second thought to the journey, rain, mud, and such like inconvenience. On that day we made but a short stage, and encamped on a large plain called Saumeda, a few miles south of Gaffat. At early morning the following day the army moved off, but we waited in the rear at least three hours before the order came for us to start. His Majesty, seated on a rock, had allowed the whole force, camp followers included, to go on in advance, and like us, unprotected from the pouring rain, and seemingly in deep thought, examined the different corps as they passed before him. We were now strictly watched several chiefs with their men guarded us; day

and night a detachment marched ahead of us, another in the rear, and a strong party never lost sight of us.

We halted that afternoon on a large plain near a small eminence called Kalgualiko, on which the Imperial tents were pitched. The following day, same mode of departure, and after travelling all night we halted at a place called Aibankab, at the foot of Mount Guna, the highest peak in Begemder, often covered during the rainy season with frozen hail.

We remained the 8th at Aibankab. In the afternoon his Majesty told us to ascend the hill on which his tents were pitched, to see the snow-covered summit of the Guna, as from our position below we could not obtain a good view of it. A few polite messages passed between us, but we did not see him.

Early on the 9th, Samuel, our balderach, was sent for. He stayed away a long time, and on his return informed us that we were to go on in advance, that our heavy baggage would be sent after us, and that we must keep with us a few light articles, that the soldiers of our escort and our mules could carry. Several of the officers of the Imperial household, to whom we had shown some kindness, came to bid us good-bye, all looking very sad—one with tears in his eyes. Though no one informed us of our destination, we all surmised that Magdala and chains were our lot. Bitwaddad Tadla, with the men under his command, now took charge of us. We soon perceived that we were more strictly guarded than ever; one or two mounted soldiers had special charge of each separate individual of our party, flogging the mules if they did not go fast enough, or causing those in front to wait until the

less well mounted could come up. We made a very long march on that day, from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., without a halt. The soldiers who carried a few parcels came on shortly after us, but the baggage mules only arrived at sunset, and dead tired. As the small rowties we had brought with us had not arrived, the head of the guard had a house in the village of Argebic cleared out for our reception. No food being forthcoming, we killed a sheep and broiled it over the fire, Abyssinian fashion; hungry and tired, we thought it the most exquisite meal we had ever made.

At sunrise the following morning, our guards told us to get ready, and soon after we were in the saddle. Our route lay E.S.E. The little doubts we might still have had about our destination completely vanished; the former prisoner knew too well the road to Magdala to have any misgiving on the subject. On the previous day the road was a gradual ascent over a well-cultivated and populous district; but on the 10th, the country bore a wild aspect, few villages were to be seen, and but few dark tufts of cedars graced the summit of the distant hills, proclaiming the presence of a church. The scenery was grand, and for the artist, no doubt full of attractions, but for Europeans, driven like cattle by semi-barbarians, the precipitous descents and steep acclivities had certainly no charms. After a few hours' march, we arrived at an almost perpendicular precipice (almost 1,500 feet in height, and not more than a quarter of a mile in breadth), that we had both to descend and ascend in order to reach the next plateau. Another couple of hours' march brought us to the gates of Begemder. In front of us arose the plateau of Dahouti, only about half a mile

distant, but we had to ascend a more abrupt precipice than the one we had just passed, and climb again a steeper ascent before we could reach it. The valley of the Jedda, a tributary of the Nile, was between us and our halting-place—a stiff march, as the silver thread we viewed from the narrow passage between the basaltic columns of the Eastern Begemder ridge was 3,000 feet below us. Tired and worn out, at last we accomplished our task. We halted for the night at a place called Wagwat, on the first terrace of the Dahouti plateau, about 500 feet from the summit. Our small tent arrived in time, our servants had carried with them a few provisions, and we managed to make a frugal meal, but only one or two of the best baggage mules made their appearance, so that we had to lie on the bare ground—the best off on leathern skins; and it was only five days after our arrival at Magdala that a small portion of our luggage arrived; and until that we could not even change our clothes or have anything to protect ourselves against the cold nights of the rainy season. Early on the morning of the 11th we continued our ascent, and soon reached the splendid plateau of Dahouti. This small province is but a large circular place, about twelve miles in diameter, covered at the time of our journey with fields in all stages of cultivation, and with beautiful green meadows, where grazed thousands of heads of cattle, and where mules, horses, and innumerable flocks everywhere met the eye. The whole circumference of this plain is dotted with small rounded hillocks, and from their base to the summit numerous well-built villages arise. Dahouti is certainly the most fertile and picturesque district I have seen in Abyssinia. By noon we

reached the eastern extremity of the plateau, and there before us again appeared one of those awful chasms we had twice met on our road since leaving Debra Tabor. We did not at all rejoice at the idea that we had to descend, then wade through the wide and rapid Beshilo, and again climb the opposite precipice—a perfect wall—to complete our day's work. Fortunately, our mules were so tired that the chief of our guard halted for the night half-way down the descent at one of the villages that are perched on the several terraces of this basaltic mountain.

At dawn on the 12th we continued our descent, crossed the Beshilo, and ascended to the opposite plateau of Walat, where we arrived at eleven A.M. There we made a slight halt, and partook of a frugal breakfast, sent by the chief of Magdala to Bitwaddad Tadla, who kindly shared it with us.

From Walat to Magdala the road is an inclined plain, constantly but gradually shelving upwards towards the high plateau of the Wallo country—the end of our journey, as Magdala is on its border. The Amba, with a few isolated mountains, all perpendicular, all crowned with walls of basalt, seem like miniatures of the large expanses of Dahouti and Wallo—small particles detached from the neighbouring gigantic masses.

The road on nearing Magdala is more abrupt; one or two conical hills have to be crossed before the Amba itself is reached. Magdala is formed of two cones, separated by a small plateau named Salangee, a few hundred feet lower than the two peaks it divides. The northern peak is the higher of the two, but on account of the absence of water and the small space it affords, it is not

inhabited; and to Magdala alone falls the privilege of being Theodorus' most famous fortress, his treasury, and his jail.

From Salanger the ascent is steeper, but we were able to ride on our mules up to the second door, a feat we could not perform whilst ascending from the Berhalo and Fiddah, as we had not only to descend almost all the way on foot, but had frequently to dismount at the ascent, and climb on all-fours, leaving the mules to find their way as best they could.

The distance from Walat to Magdala is generally accomplished in five hours, but we were nearly seven. We had to make frequent halts, and messengers came to and fro from the Amba. Many of the chiefs of the mountain came out to meet Bitwaddad Tadla. At Salanger another long halt was made while I supposed our *lettre de cachet* was examined by the chiefs in council. At last, one by one, counted like sheep, we passed the doors, and were taken to a large open space in front of the King's house. There we were met by the Ras (head of the mountain) and the six superior chiefs, who join with him in council on every important occasion. As soon as they had greeted Bitwaddad Tadla they retired a few yards, and consulted with him and Samuel. After a few minutes, Samuel told us to come on; and, accompanied by the chiefs, escorted by their followers, we were taken to a house near the Imperial fence. A fire was lighted. To fatigued and dejected men the prospect of a roof, after so many days passed in the rain, cheered us even in our misery, and when the chiefs had retired, leaving a guard at the door, we soon forgot—talking, laughing, or sleeping near the fire—that we were the vic-

tims of a low and base treachery. Two houses had been allowed to our party. At first we all slept in one of them, the other being made over to the servants, and used as a kitchen.

We had already spent three days in our prison, and were beginning to hope that the worst had happened, when, on the morning of the 16th, we were informed that the chief had come to see us. We were told to go into the room, and soon perceived that some of the soldiers carried heavy chains in their hands. The Ras informed us that it was the custom of the Amba to chain all prisoners, and that he must conform to the rules, though he had received no orders about us. The Ras—now, poor fellow, also in fetters—thought that perhaps the Emperor might change his mind; at all events, to give him a chance, he told this well-meant falsehood. Our chains are composed of two large heavy rings, hammered on the legs above the ankles, riveted together with three short, thick links; at full stretch the distance between the ankles is about a span. After we had submitted to the very painful operation of having the chains hammered on, the chief told us, before leaving, that they would enlarge our fence and enclose in it another house and two small huts. A few days afterwards Mr. Rassam took possession of the house, Mr. Prideaux and myself of one of the huts, and Samuel of another. Little by little we attained a few small privileges; we built houses for the servants and for Captain Cameron. After the rainy season of 1866, we pulled down our rotten hut and built a better one; in short, at the present date we are not badly off with respect to house-room, and have even spare space enough for a few little gardens. In every other re-

spect our position is the same. At night, guards sleep outside our door—inside the house of some. In the day-time we have only two guards, who sit at the door of the enclosure. The chains are the worst; our legs and feet get thinner and thinner, and the pressure of the iron on the bare bone is very painful. To be able to walk from one house to another, we are obliged to roll bandages under the chains; otherwise we could not move a step, so great is the pain.

Since we have been here the Emperor has taken but little notice of us. When messengers could come—even now, when he can smuggle some one through the rebels—he informs us that he is well, and hopes that we are the same. Three or four times during last year, on great feast-days, he sent us a couple of cows, and for a long time a jar of tej was daily supplied to Samuel from the Imperial cellars. But apart from his compliments—a few of Pharaoh's lean kine—for all he cared we might long ago have died of starvation.

On the 8th of January he forwarded to us through Ras Engedda—who came here with a batch of prisoners and some money—a copy of the Queen's letter. The following day another letter arrived, begging in humble terms for the workmen to be sent to him, and requesting Mr. Rassam to write to that effect. On the 19th March also he sent, through Ras Engeddah, some stores for us that had arrived at Debra Tabor. Apart from these two circumstances, we have had no dealings whatsoever with him; though some of the Europeans at Gaffat tried to escape, and though Flad returned without the workmen, he never mentioned to us either of those occurrences.

He has left us so far quiet, well aware that we are safe up here, and also probably because the time has not yet come for him to make capital of us.

Magdala is considered by Abyssinians as impregnable; nothing but a long siege, they say, can force it to surrender; but during the six weeks preceding the rainy season the absence of water at that time of the year would compel the garrison to ask for terms, if the enemy was in possession of Salanger, from where alone water could be obtained.

The Amba owes its strength to the almost perfect wall of columnar basalt that completely surrounds it, varying in height from 30 to 700 feet. Three gates, well fortified, according to Abyssinian notions, have been erected at the weakest and most accessible points. The one we came through at the north-east extremity of the Amba is closed by two doors, separated from each other by a short and steep ascent. Small earthworks have been erected on the flanks of the gate, and the ridge is strongly fenced and loopholed.

The Amba is about three-fourths of a mile in length, and from five hundred to eight hundred yards in breadth. It contains the King's houses, a church, the treasury, the jail, several large open spaces, and others covered with soldiers' huts. The garrison consists at present of about 1,200 men, half of whom are gunners. The whole population, including prisoners (400), must be between 3,000 and 4,000. Magdala is about 9,000 feet above the level of the sea; the climate is certainly not tropical. Though the sun is sometimes felt very hot, the thermometer, exposed to its rays, never rises above 105 degrees on the

warmest days; and the summit of the high mountains of the Falla country, only a few miles distant, is for nine months of the year covered with snow or frozen hail. The locality, on the whole, can be considered as healthy. Catarrh and slight bronchial affections are common, and now and then small-pox and fever break out in the jail, and spread more or less over the mountain; but this could be avoided by better management. I am only astonished that more severe epidemics do not break out and decimate the place.

Not many days after our arrival frequent demands were made for medicine, and before a fortnight had elapsed, I was, *nolens volens*, gazetted in medical charge of Magdala. The chief set the example, and the soldiers followed. In our position we must endeavour to make friends with even the worst ruffians, and I have therefore always done my utmost to please and satisfy every one.

I am glad to say that I have always been very fortunate up till now, and have not a death to record, either amongst ourselves, our servants, or our followers, or in my large but unprofitable private practice.

Abyssinia, the only Christian kingdom in Africa, is situated between 9 and 16 N. latitude, 36 E. longitude, and the Red Sea, or rather the low land inhabited by the lawless tribes of Shoas, Danakils, and Adals. Its other boundaries are—to the west, the Sennar; to the south, the Galla country; to the north, the Soudan Mensa, Bogos, &c. The general aspect of the country is one of high plateaux, separated by narrow and deep valleys. The provinces bordering on the Tana Sea offer an exception to the rule; they present large and undulating plains,

intersected by high hills, but we find nowhere that common character of the land, deep chasms separating from one another precipitous flat plateaux.

With the exception of Taranta, Lamalmon, and some peaks in Shoa, Lasta, and in the Wallo country, that tower to a height of 12,000 or 14,000 feet above the level of the sea, the elevation of the plateaux averages between 7,000 and 9,000 feet. Wochnee, at the foot of the western range, is about 3,500 feet above the sea, but Tschelga, only a day's journey from it, is already 7,000 feet. The basin of the Tana Sea is somewhat lower, computed at 6,000 feet, but the land shelves rapidly to the higher altitude, and a few miles from the lake from 7,000 to 8,000 feet is obtained.

Abyssinia, by giving birth to the Blue Nile, made that country at all times the longing ambition of travellers. Bruce had the first glory of ascertaining its source, surmised only before him by Lobo and others. The source of the Blue Nile is in Gojam, and issues at an elevation of 10,000 feet above the level of the sea. It flows at first north, towards the Tana Sea, where it is greatly increased by the waters of the many small streams that lake receives; it again issues at the south-east extremity of that reservoir, circumvallates the province of Gojam, again to flow towards the north. The other most important rivers of Abyssinia are the Takazze, a considerable affluent of the Nile (issuing from the mountains of Lasta, it joins the Nile near the 18th degree), the Bashilo, the Djidda, the Gumodge—all affluents of the Blue Nile. The Nareb receives the waters of the Taranta range, and loses itself in the sands of the Soudan. The

Hawash drains the highlands of Shoa, and terminates in the Adal country. Many smaller streams either flow into these more important ones or into the Tana Sea.

The principal lakes are Lake Tana, in Dembea, and Lake Haik, in the Gedjam country.

Apart from Gondar, Adowa, and Kourata, there are but few towns of any importance. Abyssinians prefer small villages situated near their fields and cattle to any of the advantages of towns. Gondar is no more; Adowa I have not seen; but if we take Kourata as a sample, we must acknowledge that they have not much to attract. Apart from a dozen mud and stone houses, the dwellings of the citizens differ in no marked respect from those of the peasants. The same circular hut, with mud walls and thatched roof, is common to both. The same remark applies to the practice of stabling the favourite mules near the master's alga, as well as to the filth, dirt, and vermin. The traveller, even favoured with the hospitality of the wealthiest, will soon bid farewell to his well-meaning host, and seek elsewhere for fresh air and rest.

During the reign of Theodorus, who obliges all the great men (not in prison) to remain near him, the King's camp has acquired a great importance. As a rule, his Majesty selects a hill; if he remains only a few days, a tent is pitched; if longer, a few houses are soon built. The camp is pitched in a circle around the sovereign's temporary abode. The larger circle includes a great many small ones, as every chief is surrounded by his soldiers and followers. On the march, the same order is followed. A small red tent is always pitched beforehand, upon the spot where the Emperor intends to halt; as the troops arrive

they fall into their respective quarters, and no confusion at any time prevails.

Churches abound—one near every village, and several in every town, is the rule. They are by far the best built houses in the country, surrounded as they are by guicho and cedars; always in a commanding position, they add much to the picturesqueness of the landscape. They are all built on the same pattern—that is to say, a large circular stone building, composed of three concentric circles. The smaller central room is screened from the eyes of the people, and the priests alone can enter it. It is intended to represent the Holy of Holies. It contains the tabot, or ark—a small wood box, the receptacle of the sacred volumes. The sanctuary where the priests officiate is formed by the second circle. This is in reality the church, as the nave, where the congregation assembles, is but a verandah. The interior of the church, and sometimes also the verandah, are adorned with rude paintings—a strange mixture, representing the favourite saints—St. Michael, St. George, the Apostles, our Lord, the Virgin Mary, God himself, the Devil, and former Emperors. All Abyssinians who confess before they die, have the privilege of being buried amongst the trees outside the church, but no stone or memorial is there to recall the "dear departed."

Markets are held weekly in the neighbourhood of the large towns; but, as a rule, a place is selected at an equal distance from a large number of villages, and on that lonely spot, where not a house is to be seen, hundreds weekly resort to purchase and sell. Near the King's camp a market is held daily, or rather *was*.

It is difficult to obtain any correct idea of the population. From time immemorial, the Abyssinians have been doing their utmost to destroy themselves—to efface their very name from the list of nations. Owing, however, to the great fertility of the country—giving, without trouble, three harvests annually—and to its general salubrity, the only effects of continual civil wars have been, until the present reign, to leave the population at a standstill as to numbers, estimated at between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000. The Abyssinian race is certainly, as the Yèez (original) signifies, a mixed one, not only mixed with reference to the other large divisions of the human race, but also presenting considerable differences amongst its various tribes. The Tigrean differs greatly in his physical appearance from the Amhara, this one from the Agau and Falasha, and all from the various Galla tribes who at different periods have settled in the country, The common features are a mixture of the Caucasian and African races. The skin is of a dark brown, but the nose is straight, and the lips small; the hair is black and long, and somewhat curly; the hands and feet small, the limbs well knit, and, on the average, people are of the middle height. The women are smaller, those kept in the harems of the great are fair, their extremities small, the hair falling on the neck and shoulders. In youth, some are pleasing, but few can be called handsome. Early marriages soon destroy their forms, and women of twenty have many of the attributes of old age. The Gallas, who are supposed to have arrived from the interior and settled in some parts of Abyssinia towards the year 1537, are much fairer than the Abyssinians; their hair longer and more silky, their features

more delicate, and amongst them are seen really handsome men and women.

The Amharic language is, like the race itself, impure and mixed. The greater number of words can be traced to the Yeez, Arabic, or Hebrew. The language of Tigre is more connected with the Yeez than the Amharic. The Agaus have a dialect of their own, offering no connexion with the Amharic, Yeez, or Galla languages. This one is also quite distinct from any of the Abyssinian dialects. The Falashas have the same language as the Kauratas, and, though both are supposed to be of Jewish extraction, the people have retained no knowledge of the Hebrew language.

The Abyssinians can be divided into two classes—the tillers of the land and their parasites. The Abyssinian peasants are, for an African race, a hard-working class. It is true that the ground requires only to be scratched to yield abundant harvests thrice a-year. The primitive plough—a forked piece of wood—would be quite unfit for any other than the rich soil of this land. Under anything like a regularly constituted government, the peasants would be a happy and prosperous people; but beyond what by law they are obliged to give, and that is considerable, they are constantly plundered by every one. They just manage to keep themselves alive; and with all their labour, after years of semi-starvation, clad in rags, too often in the end perish from utter destitution.

The parasites include the priests, the soldiers, and the beggars. The thousands of priests who live on the fat of the land are a heavy burden on the peasants. Churches arise on all sides, and to each of them a large number of

priests is attached. When Gondar was the capital of the Abyssinian empire, it boasted of no less than 44 churches, and each of them had to support 317 priests or deacons—not bad for a population of from twenty to twenty-five thousand. There may be some exceptions, but as a rule the Abyssinian priest is ignorant and bigoted. Many cannot read; few can write. They learn by heart a certain number of Ethiopic prayers; these are chanted, accompanied by dances, for the edification of an ignorant and superstitious people. The Virgin Mary, some saints, or certain renowned anchorites, are held in much higher esteem than God himself. The several ceremonies of the Church are a curious mixture of Christianity, Judaism, and ignorance. Christianity is here but a name—an empty epithet by which the poor are duped and impostors thrive.

Soldiers are the curse of the land. It is so much more in accordance with the character and tastes of the people rather to live on others than to work, that it is difficult to understand why even a few labour, whilst so many live by exaction and plunder. Every province has its rebels—if not the mob army of the sovereigns of the land—to feed, clothe, and pay, and when supplies become scarce, the last piece of bread is snatched from the peasant's mouth, and to punish him for having withheld it his poor hut is set on fire, and the rising harvest in his fields wantonly destroyed.

Beggars are necessarily numerous. First, because many prefer begging to work, and the *otium cum dignitate* to the easy profession of arms; secondly, so many peasants are reduced to the utmost poverty by the lawless bands of robbers and soldiers that infest the land, that, homeless,

and without any means to cultivate the soil, they are forced to appeal to the charity of others.

Curious to say, the peasant is despised; his very name is applied as an insulting epithet. The priest is not much respected; the soldier stands higher in the social scale, but the ragged, itchy, leprous beggar is exalted above all. Beggary is the only honourable profession in Abyssinia.

The few merchants in this country trade with Metemma or Massowah; export ivory, gold, wax, honey, cattle, &c., and import cotton cloth, red Surat cloth, tobacco for snuff, silks, &c. As a rule they are rich, and held in good repute. Their profits are enormous, but their risks are also great. Often after a long life of toil they are spoiled by the sovereign of the land, under some trivial pretext, of all their property. Silversmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, and those more or less skilled in handicrafts are looked upon with suspicion by the ignorant mass. They are supposed to have intercourse with the devil and with evil spirits, to be powerful magicians, &c. For these reasons they are generally avoided, and few are strong-minded enough to follow their well-remunerated but despised trades.

The Abyssinian dress consists principally of a large piece of cloth, and is alike the garb of the menial, the peasant, and the noble. The only difference is, that the texture of the poor man's cloth is coarser than the red striped shama of the higher classes. Priests alone wear turbans. Old men and women who have adopted a monastic life cover their heads with a small white cap; all the others protect the head with a thick coating of butter. The priests and lower orders shave their heads once

a-month. The soldier allows his hair to grow long, wears it plaited and well besmeared with butter, and powdered with a green leaf having a fragrant smell. All wear trousers made of white cotton cloth. In the Amhara country they are worn long, cut above the instep in a triangular shape. In Tigray they are shorter, and reach only below the knee. To these the soldier adds a belt of cotton cloth, from fifteen to twenty yards long. When he goes into action he wears, instead of his cloth, either a shama (a fur collar with eight or ten strips hanging from it, and falling on the shoulders) or a small cloak, made of red, black, or some gaudy-looking cloth or silk. Great men alone are allowed to wear shirts. This article of dress is an Abyssinian decoration presented by the sovereign. In former years a shirtman was held in high esteem, but Theodorus has been been as quite as liberal of his decorations as of his titles, and even some of our servants are members of the "Order of the Shirt." The bitwa, or bracelet of silver-gilt, worn on the right arm, is a high distinction, only accorded to celebrated warriors. The spear, the sword, and the shield are the soldier's arms. Many acquire great skill in the use of the first; but fire-arms, though generally bad and useless matchlocks, are held in much higher estimation. The strength of the different pretenders and of Theodorus himself depends on the numbers of their gunmen.

The women's dress consists of a long shirt reaching down to their feet, made of the common country cloth, and tied round the waist by a small band of the same material. Those who can afford it wear also the gabeer or the shama, like the men. The waizeras, or ladies of

rank, wear embroidered calico shirts lined with a common native one. Some of these shirts are very handsomely embroidered. When travelling, the waizeras also wear embroidered trousers, called "libalwas," and a shama thrown over the head, as well as covering the body, leaving only a small aperture for the dark black eyes to peep through. Those of the highest rank wear over the shama a blue silk bernous, richly embroidered. Silver rings—ten on the small finger, four on the index, and four on the third finger—are seen on almost every female's hand. The other articles of female jewellery are the "deri," a small silver chain; the godichas, small round earrings of silver-gilt; the walwa, a silver-gilt hair-pin; the ambar or bracelet; and the "ugerkitabs" and "alwas"—two different kinds of anklets. Virgins and unmarried women shave the crown of the head; married women and those past sixteen years of age allow all the hair to grow, and wear it braided in small or large plaits, gathered in front, and allowed to fall on the neck and shoulders. Butter in large abundance adorns this coiffure; the greater the amount, the more it indicates wealth and rank. To complete the toilet, the hands and feet are dyed with "gouchivat," and the eyelashes blacked with "kool."

The Brindo festivals described by Bruce have ever since given to Abyssinians the name of living upon raw meat. This is, however, not quite correct. It is true they greedily devour the still thrilling flesh of the cow, and love it above all things; but few even amongst the greatest in the land can often enjoy that luxury. Well-to-do people on great feast-days kill a cow for themselves and followers; the lower orders take it perhaps once

a-year, at Christmas or on the Abyssinian New Year's-day. The usual food of the people is large flat cakes of sour tef bread, rendered more palatable by the addition of butter and spices. The better classes eat once a-day of a highly-spiced dish called "wat," remarkable only for the preponderance of red pepper, onions, and butter. In this sauce floats quanta (sun-dried meat), or a few pieces of skinny mutton, a veteran fowl, or such coarse vegetables as nettles or gomen. Very poor people, and soldiers on the march, live on parched grain (chimbera), sometimes for months. In this semi-starved condition it is easy to understand how they gorge themselves with animal food, raw and bleeding, if they are lucky enough to obtain it even under such circumstances.

It is easy to explain some of the wonderful stories related by Bruce and Salt of soldiers on the march cutting off the hind-quarters of a cow, and driving her afterwards in this helpless condition to the end of that day's march, when only is she slaughtered. Tej—a kind of mead, made of honey, water, and the bitter leaves of the guicho—is the favourite drink of the Abyssinians, but only a few can indulge in that luxury. Talla, a kind of sour toast-and-water, made of fermented wheat or barley, is the usual potation of the petty chiefs and more wealthy peasants. Coffee and tobacco, savouring of Mohammedanism, are condemned by the Church; snuff, however, is a great favourite, and indulged in by many.

Abyssinia presents all varieties of climate, from the cold, cutting wind of the icy north to the oppressive heat of the torrid zone. In the deep valleys the heat is sometimes quite unbearable, the malaria in many of them fatal to

the unwary sojourner; whilst on the high ranges, such as Samen, the cold is so intense that its snow-covered peaks could never be used as a permanent abode. The plateaux, varying in height more than 2,000 feet from one another, offer also much difference in their respective climates. If, however, we take the average height of 8,000 feet as the altitude of Abyssinia, we can then class its climate with the best of the temperate zone—beautiful, healthy, and agreeable.

The year is divided into the rainy and dry seasons. In the northern and western provinces the rainy season begins as early as May; in the eastern and southern not before the end of June or the beginning of July. On St. John's-day, the 11th September, the rainy season is supposed to be at an end, and fifteen days later, on Maskal (feast of the Cross), the dry season to have set in. The fall of rain varies greatly, according to the different localities; here (Magdala) it is very limited indeed. During the dry season hardly a month passes by without a few showers, and in many parts of Abyssinia it rains during the whole of January. The summer months are very pleasant indeed, though sometimes during the day the sun is hot and fierce. On high plateaux, like Magdala, a fire is always a welcome companion in the evening.

The diseases of Abyssinia are necessarily influenced by the physical conformation of the country. Those of the hot and sultry valleys have to a high degree all the characteristics of tropical diseases, whilst on the high plateaux they differ but slightly from those of the temperate zone.

Diseases of the skin are very common. Itch is met with in every class of life. Farugo and hirpes circinatus

come next in order of frequency. My stock of soap being limited, and my sulphur ointment exhausted, in cases of itch I was reduced to resort to the infusion of tobacco. This is, however, a very good substitute, and I have seen under its influence some very bad cases speedily cured. In farugo I advised daily ablutions—the whole body to be well rubbed with endoad (the native soap), and as long as I had any I gave to such patients aulealine pomatum for friction in the evening. Afterwards I used instead a strong infusion of wood ashes; this seemed also to answer well. In slight cases of hirpes I caused the affected parts to be frictioned with powdered alum, in more inveterate cases to be touched with a strong solution of bichloride of mercury. Leprosy exists to a large extent all over Abyssinia, especially in the neighbourhood of the Tana Sea. Of elephantiasis I saw several cases; one of our servants is affected with an enormous elephantiasis of the scrotum. Simple ulcers are seldom met with; those I have seen yielded readily to a few applications of nitrate of silver or bluestone, as soon as the old scab had been removed by poultices. I have met with no tumours of a malignant character, only with a few cysts; the largest I removed was of the size of an egg, and situated just above the knee-joint.

Simple ophthalmia is very common, but yields readily to a few drops of solution of nitrate of silver, followed by a zinc collyrium. I met with several cases of cataract, but was advised not to operate. If the operation succeeded, some saint would reap all the honour of the cure; if it failed, I should be accused of blinding the patient, and very disagreeable consequences might follow.

Amygdalitis is a very common affection amongst children and young people. Shortly after my arrival many were brought to me with large ulcers on the tonsils and upper part of the pharynx. For some time I was under the impression that it was a form of disease peculiar to the country, until I found out that it was the result of the practice in use. The native practitioners in case of amygdalitis introduce the forefinger into the throat, and lacerate the tonsils and surrounding parts. In consequence of the treatment, many die from the severe inflammation that follows; or, when they recover, large ulcers appear—the result of this mal-practice. Diseases of the chest are not commonly met with. I only saw one case of phthisis. Catarrh and simple bronchitis prevail to a certain extent in elevated localities, before and after the rainy season. I have not met with pneumonia or pleuritis, nor with any case of disease of the heart. Just before the rains, several children were brought to me suffering from a mild form of whooping-cough; a few doses of ipecacuanha, followed by small doses of belladonna, speedily relieved them. Dyspepsia is a common affection, especially amongst those who have been living on coarse and insufficient food. Local applications of blisters on the epigastrium, small doses of bismuth and rhubarb, gave relief in a few cases; but in many instances, as the cause could not be removed, the effects remained. On the lower plateaux and in the deep valleys diarrhœa and dysentery are common, and are exceedingly dangerous diseases. Here diarrhœa is generally brought on by cold and exposure, and is easily checked by a few doses of castor-oil, followed by a few astringents. Dysentery is even less frequent; the few cases that came

under my observation were soon relieved by ipecacuanha and gentian, cold water enemas, tannic acid, opium, or other astringents.

Intestinal worms are one of the most universal diseases of the country; few, even children of five or six years of age, are free from the tapeworm, and all Abyssinians, male and female, take regularly, once every two months, the infusion of kousso. A few who cannot swallow this nauseous dose take other anthelminthics, some of them very powerful. The principal ones are the "wageris," a long thin root; enkoko, a small reddish seed; kassala, a small black grain; mechamecho, a bulbous root; mausema, the bark of a tree.*

The worfat (ascaris lumbricoides) is frequently met with in children.

Intermittent, remittent, and continued fevers are the bane of the low land. In some localities the malaria is so intense, that to spend in such places a single night is followed either by a speedy death or a for ever ruined constitution. On the higher plateaux, a very few cases of intermittent fever occur amongst the most exposed, badly clad, and badly fed portion of the community. This mild form of fever often disappears of itself; at any rate, a few doses of quinine are sufficient to arrest its course. It is far otherwise in cases such as I observed at Kourata and Gaffat.† There the continued or slightly remittent

* I have only seen these drugs as they were brought from the market. I am therefore unable to form an opinion as to their botanical species.

† The cases of fever observed at Gaffat had been contracted in the neighbourhood of the Tana Sea.

fevers, accompanied by typhoid symptoms, required great care and vigilance. I had several very serious cases to attend. The treatment I adopted, and which proved successful, is the following: In the beginning, an emetic, morning and evening; if the slightest remission showed itself, small doses of quinine.

The bowels were kept open by castor-oil, the skin's action favoured, and the dry burning heat remedied by vinegar and water spongings; at the same time, to sustain the sinking frame, several ounces of brandy and good beef-tea were administered during the day.

Small-pox appears every year in one province or the other. In 1866 it spread from the King's camp to the towns and villages bordering on the Tana Sea. Several of our servants contracted the disease, but none died. During an epidemic, inoculation is practised to a great extent; the matter is taken from a young healthy person slightly attacked, and inoculated on the fore-arm by means of a razor.

I received, during the spring of the present year, some vaccine tubes, kindly forwarded to me by the Political Resident, Aden. After a few failures, it succeeded very well, and during a month or so the blessing of vaccination was extended to many. It was, however, stopped by order of the chief, as immense crowds used to assemble on those days at the door of our fence. The people accepted this, for them quite unknown, prophylactic with great favour. Unfortunately, an old man, whose grandchild had been one of the first vaccinated, in his wisdom declared that the children would die if the pustules were broken. Though the few who allowed the vaccine to be taken from their

children saw that no evil consequence followed, so few imitated their example that it was quite impossible to satisfy the clamorous crowd.

Measles and scarlatina are not unknown, but I have never seen a case of either of them. Cholera made its first appearance in Abyssinia in 1856. Ten years later it spread from Massowah to Tigray, and from that province it decimated the greater part of the country. This second epidemic was severely felt in the King's camp and in Begemder. Diarrhœa was very prevalent at the time, and from what I heard and observed, it always preceded the attack of cholera from a few hours to several days. Vomiting was a constant and a very troublesome symptom. Though the epidemic carried away thousands, it was not of a very malignant character. Almost all those who were attended in time, and carefully followed the instructions they received, recovered from the attack. I found of all remedies chlorodyne the most valuable. When I had exhausted the small quantity I had with me, I gave instead the following mixture: Chloroform, ten drops; tinct. opii, twenty drops; in a spoonful of cold water, and repeated every second hour until a change for the better took place. Spoonfuls of milk and brandy were the usual beverage allowed. A strong mustard poultice was frequently applied to the epigastrium, to check the vomiting; and dry frictions were practised as long as the cold stage lasted. In several cases of deep collapse I obtained good results from drachm doses of tincture of cantharides diluted in brandy and water.

Scrofula, in the shape of small ganglions on the neck or groin, is a very common disease in many parts of Abys-

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sinia; in Magdala it is rare. The long-continued use of external applications of tincture of iodine and the iodide of potassium interiorly has always improved the local disease and the general health. Simple muscular rheumatism is occasionally met with. I only saw one case of articular rheumatism; the attack was semi-acute; quinine, followed by iodide of potassium and carbonate of potash, allowed the patient (he was a messenger, native of Massowah) to resume his trips between here and the coast.

Neuralgia either interiortal or sciatical is frequently met with. The treatment in those cases was at first hypodermic injection of a solution of morphia; and when that failed, blistering tissue was applied and the denuded skin powdered with half-grain doses of morphia.

But what is the bonda—that disease peculiar to Abyssinian damsels? After seeing many cases, I must declare my doubts—nay, my ignorance on the subject. Is it a form of hysteria? Is it, as the natives declare, a possession of the devil? All I can say is that it is a strange, curious, morbid affection, unlike anything I have read of or seen. A young girl is suddenly seized with the idea that she is a hyena; quite well a few minutes before, she shrieks and howls, and her voice resembles that of the animal she personifies. She runs along on all-fours so quickly that to catch her men are sometimes obliged to mount their swiftest steeds. A poor weakly creature, she now requires many strong men to hold her! The pulse is quick, the face flushed, the look absent, the whole body trembling with excitement. She keeps swinging herself backwards and forwards, rolling her head from side to side, her hands firmly clenched; she hears

and knows no one. All at once she breaks from those who hold her, rushes frantically, wildly, in all directions, imitating the cry or laugh of her adopted species. Suddenly she stops, smells the ground, shrieks with delight—she has found at last what she was in search of—dog's excrement; this she greedily devours, and afterwards falls into a kind of trance. The next morning she wakes up none the worse, except a little fatigued, and resumes her usual occupations as if nothing had happened. Abyssinian medicine is a mixture of the grossest ignorance and most glaring imposture. Some individuals pretend to possess extraordinary knowledge of the medical art, use drugs, charms, and other incantations to which none are initiated, as the precious secret is part of the family heritage, clouded in mystery, quackery of the lowest order. Welcome they are to hide their pretended science; little good indeed would come from its knowledge.

Apart from this jugglery, there exist certain popular remedies well known to all, that, in the absence of all real science, are credited and adopted by the people in general; they are—in syphilis, an infusion of wasba (a kind of sarsaparilla), the favourite remedy, but being expensive, the following one is most usual—that is, linseed and red pepper made into a kind of paste. They also resort for the same purpose to some hot springs in Begemder. Ulcers are touched with bluestone. In small-pox a decoction of linseed and good food. For fever, munchoroo (a root giving a red dye) mixed with butter. For cholera, seven raisins blessed by the priests. For diarrhœa, albet or dakassa, two small grass seeds, mixed with butter. For dysentery, the priests read and

chant near the patient; they have several drastic purgatives; melted butter, honey, and oil are used as emetics and purgatives. For rheumatism, cupping with a horn is the most usual remedy. Snuff is blown into the eye in ophthalmia. Priests play a great part in time of sickness; in every desperate case they are called in to read and sing psalms, and to write charms that are affixed to the patient, to his bed, the doorposts of the house, even to his favourite horse and mule! Women are confined in the manner previously described, and many die in confinement. Immediately the child is born, fresh butter is forced down its throat. Children are weaned only after the second year, but are circumcised on the eighth day.

The high lands of Abyssinia belong principally to the volcanic formation. Porphyry appears already at the foot of the western range, and basalt, trachyte, dolerite in all varieties, are almost alone met with from Wochnee to the Galla country. The eastern slope of the mountains of Begemder, from the summit to the slope of the plateau forming the provinces of Auseta, Dahoute, Talanta, and the Wallo country, is crowned with magnificent columnar basalt. Iron and coal exist in large quantities; the coal is not used, and the little iron worked in this country is merely scraped out of the deep ravines of the high mountains. Sulphur is found in many parts. Gold is washed out of the sand of many a mountain torrent, but no other precious metals or stones have as yet been discovered.

The great difference in temperature, the more or less exposed or sheltered localities, the absence of water or the vicinity of flowing streams—all these different circumstances impress the Abyssinian flora with a peculiar

aspect, so much so that in this limited region the most magnificent tropical vegetation, as well as the dwarfed products of Alpine regions, can equally be found. Here we meet with the coffee-tree in its wild state, with grapes, apricots, and varieties of citrons. Here the jessamine and the wild rose unite together to form fragrant bowers, shaded by the spreading branches of the fig-bearing sycamore. We cross a low valley, and amidst the bambans, high and coarse grass, rise the poisonous Kalquol, and the Jibera, whose long stalk of fifteen or twenty feet is crowned with large, handsome leaves. At the same time one may perceive a dark spot on yonder hill; it is a church, hidden by its antique cedars. Barley and wheat grow well on the high plateaux; teff *(Poa Abyssinica)*, a small millet seed, the favourite food of the Abyssinians, is cultivated almost everywhere, except in the lowest valleys, where the heat is too intense. The wild nettle is used as a vegetable during the long Abyssinian fasts. Potatoes are beginning to be appreciated by the natives. Tobacco is cultivated everywhere; the best comes from Begemder, and even this is but a poor imitation of the fragrant weed. The endood, not a bad substitute for soap, grows wild in sheltered localities. Tef is cultivated to some extent in the valleys and in the low country, and the *Brayera Abyssinica* (Kosso) graces by its lovely presence the undulating plains of Agau Medar.

Large herds of cattle are to be found in almost every province of Abyssinia. Some, such as Dembea, Damot, and the Wallo, are famed for the beauty of their oxen and cows. Begemder (literally "sheep's land") justly boasts of its fine breed of sheep. Goats abound in the

mountain region of Lasta, Samen, &c. The best horses come from Shoa and Gedjam; the rest are far inferior, very much like Indian tattoos. Mules, the favourite trading animals of the Abyssinians, are reared in great numbers in the Galla country, Shoa, and some parts of Tigray. The lion dwells in the deep ravines, and in the dense jungles that border the large rivers. The hyena, a semi-sacred animal, is everywhere, and climbs even the natural walls of the Amba. The leopard prowls around the towns and villages. The hippopotamus and the buffalo abound in the Tana Sea and in the large rivers. Elephants wander in large hordes through the provinces of Galabat and Walkait. Antelopes of many species are seen everywhere, from the vicinity of the large towns to the most desolate tracts. The monkey tribe is numerous in this neighbourhood; they appear sometimes in such numbers that more than once they have caused a panic in the garrison, who took them for their mortal enemies the Gallas.

Birds of prey live a glorious life in this country. All, I believe, from the golden eagle to the crow (a curious one, with a large lump on the bill), can here be found. Partridges, quails, guinea-fowls, snipes, ducks, geese, &c., exist in such abundance, and are so tame, that the sportsman's skill is but little tried; it is, indeed, "shooting made easy." Crocodiles and a few bony fish, &c., are found in the Nile, and several kind of perch are obtained from the Tana Sea, but it is said that crocodiles are never seen in its waters.

Snakes are common; some of them very venomous. I once saw a beautiful boa-constrictor in the marshes near

Kourata. Scorpions are in some places countless; luckily, their sting is not dangerous. Insects of all shapes and sizes seem to cover everything, dead or alive. The useful ones are few; nay, only one—the bee—of great value is found in this country, as honey is one of the greatest of Abyssinian luxuries. The troublesome ones are endless. The locusts have been a real scourge of late. After these come the swarms of flies, of fleas, of black and red ants, and other unmentionables, all of which seem to have no other dwelling but the abode of man, and no other end but to tease and torment him.

I should like to find in the people among whom I have been detained so long a prisoner some good point, some redeeming virtue; to be able to extol their religious and moral life, their courage, their veracity, and not to be exposed to the charge that my judgment is prejudiced, and that my sufferings guide my pen. Alas! much as I regret it, in all honesty I must declare that, as far as I am aware, the Abyssinians have not a single good quality. They are cowards and treacherous, cannot speak the truth, delight in robbery, and boast of most cruel and dastardly murders. Naturally drunkards and gluttons, they are only abstemious by necessity; of such coarse morality that the most debauched would blush at the sight of their corrupt manners; their pleasure is to bully the poor and helpless, whilst they humbly cringe before the rich and powerful.

So much has already been said by former travellers on the customs of this country, that I will limit myself to a few words on the most important ones. Among Western nations politeness requires that the head should be un-

covered; in the East, the feet; in Abyssinia, respect and obedience are displayed by the arrangement of the cloth. Before the Emperor and great chiefs, the shoulders must be laid bare, and the cloth girded round the loins; before equals, a shoulder only is uncovered; when an inferior is addressed (as we usually are), if the great man is seated he does not rise, pulls the cloth over his nose, and salutes the bowing and cringing menial with the contemptuous form of the second personal singular affixed to his words.

Polygamy exists to a fearful extent. All who can afford it keep several wives and concubines. Though there is a religious marriage, few avail themselves of it, as it binds both for life. Abyssinians prefer the more simple ceremony of marrying by the "King's death" (the usual form of oath in the country)—a marriage as easily contracted as dissolved. But even this shadow of morality is generally dispensed with. Men and women live in concubinage with no other tie but the pleasure they find in each other's society—short passing intercourse sufficient only to gratify their grossest passions. Women are kept in a very degraded position; they are not allowed to sit or eat in the presence of the men; they cook the food, spin the cotton, clean the stables, and carry water and wood. Men, on the other hand, wash the clothes, go to the market, are dressmakers, embroiderers, and tailors.

The first person met on the road can be taken for judge by contending parties. Such judgment can be reversed by the King alone. There exists a code of law—"fetanegust," a Draconian imitation, death being the mildest punishment it records. The King is above the law. All his decisions are the purest expressions of

justice; nowhere as in Abyssinia is the divine right of kings so universally believed and obeyed.

Immoral, sensual, ignorant, it is impossible for Abyssinians to hold any social intercourse. Their festivals are but low and coarse orgies; they have no literature, no means of recreation; their power of conversation is most limited. It begins generally about God, ends with lascivious talk, or begging; jealousy compels them to treat as prisoners their temporary wives; and though superstitious and bigoted, they fear more the despot than the Creator. Some months ago it was said that the Bishop had excommunicated the King and his followers. I asked some of the best Christians among our guards what they intended to do. The answer was, "There is a God in Heaven, it is true; but there is also a Theodorus on earth: the first is far, the second near." In short, what can be said of a people with whom prostitution is no shame; robbery, treachery, and murder are a glory; and who consider it the greatest shame to wash except once a-year, on St. John's-day! Better, far better, a savage race than a semi-civilized one.

I will conclude with a few words on the ruler of this country, and on our actual position. Theodorus is about forty-eight years of age, darker than many of his countrymen; his black eyes are slightly depressed, the nose straight, the mouth large, the lips small; he is well knit, a splendid horseman, excels in the use of the spear, and on foot will tire his hardiest followers. When in good humour the expression of his countenance is pleasing, his smile attractive, his manners courteous, really kingly; but when in anger, his aspect is frightful, his black face acquires an ashy hue,

his eyes, bloodshot and fierce, seem to shed fire, his thin lips, compressed, have but a whitish margin round the mouth, his very hair seems to stand erect, and his whole deportment is that of a savage and ungovernable fury.

As Lij Kassa (nephew of the celebrated Dijaz Komfou, Governor of Western Abyssinia), he rose in rebellion against Ras Ali; threats, promises, even such a bribe as his daughter being of no avail. The Ras was compelled to send armies after armies to subdue the brave young chieftain. Kassa, however, born a warrior and a conqueror, drove them like sheep from the province; he had proclaimed his own, and seeing in the young and debauched Ras Ali a despicable rival, attacked him and forced him to seek safety in flight.

Left undisputed master of the Amhara, he turned his victorious arms against the sovereigns of Gejam, Shoa, and Tigray. His name, his courage, his cunning were invincible; and in 1854, without rival, King of the Kings of Abyssinia, he was crowned at Axum under the name of Theodorus. Whilst only a pretender to the crown, he had conceived the idea of conquering for himself the Soudan. He descended from the Abyssinian Alps, and led his host to the hot but fertile plains of Galabat. He had yet to learn what a handful of disciplined troops can do against disorderly masses. At Kassala about 500 Turkish Irregulars forced the wounded and humbled Theodorus to retrace his steps towards his mountain fastnesses. Arrived at the pinnacle of his fortune, Theodorus never forgot the dreams of his younger days; Kassala, Sennar, and the rich provinces they protect were then,

more than ever, prizes he must win. Still, he remembered his defeat, and in order better to secure his object, proposed to the sovereigns of England and France a crusade against the infidels.

This rage for foreign conquest was the cause of his ruin, and, in many respects, of our own misfortunes. To invade, with any hope of success, a land protected by well-armed and well-trained soldiers, Theodorus' plan was to overwhelm the enemy by the immensity of his host; consequently, until the time for action should arrive, he kept on foot an army of at least 150,000 fighting men. To feed and otherwise supply this force, amounting to 700,000 or 800,000, including camp followers, he impoverished the whole nation. Discontent was soon followed by open rebellion, which broke out in several remote provinces; and though Theodorus marched against the rebels, and destroyed to the utmost the land and its inhabitants, he failed before the passive resistance of the peasants.

When Theodorus was a candidate for power, he was brave, generous, pious, and just, and led a moral and sober life; ambition, achieved, either altered his nature or brought to light his many vices. It was not long before the crowned Emperor proved himself more cruel and more treacherous than any of his countrymen, more bloodthirsty, more regardless of human life than any other being that not only Abyssinia, but the world at large ever produced. Famines, epidemics, and desertions soon reduced his army; rebellion spread far and wide; one by one he lost all the jewels of his crown; and at the present day the great conqueror of Abyssinia, the really remark-

able man, is nothing more than a robber chief, a wholesale murderer, without country, army, or friends.

Of all the Abyssinian Empire, some years ago crouching and trembling at his feet, he now only retains a few ambas; his very camp is pitched in the midst of his mortal foes. Mad with rage and despair, his cruelty knows no bounds; his best friends, his stanchest supporters, his slavish followers, his enemies, all alike fall victims to his fury. He destroyed by fire the sacred churches, and cast into the flames aged priests and young maidens. He killed or loaded with fetters his friends, his faithful chiefs; he tortured to death his adopted father; caroused in blood; ruined whole provinces by fire and the sword. Still the cowardly slaves trembled and obeyed, but when at last he added to all these atrocities the murder in cold blood of 670 of his own soldiers, the men from Wadela, a cry of horror re-echoed throughout the land, the cup filled to the brim overflowed, and, driven to despair, soldiers deserted *en masse*, and the peasants armed, preferring death on the battle-field to his sway, the quiet of the grave to constant fear and misery.

We are not the first white men he has ill-used and ill-treated; long ago he gave vent to his hatred towards our race. The Coptic Patriarch he insulted and imprisoned; the Turkish Ambassador, Abdul Rahman Bey, he imprisoned and plundered; the French Consul, M. Le Jean, he chained, detained, and at last kicked out of the country. Nothing came of this; the insults were not resented, and Theodorus believed himself beyond the reach of retributive justice. On the next occasion he went a step further. The pious and learned missionary, the Rev. Mr. Stern, was

almost beaten to death by his orders, and heavily chained. Captain Cameron and all the Europeans in the country, with the exception of a few that worked for him, were shortly afterwards loaded with fetters, dragged from prison to prison, tortured, starved, left naked for days—a tale of suffering and cruelty unequalled in the annals of history.

The ill-treatment the misson received at his hands, our long imprisonment in chains, is all recorded in these pages, and I need not revert to it. Even Abyssinians, bad as they are, cannot justify his conduct towards us. Messengers have at all times been held sacred in this country, and we are the first that have been subjected to such harsh treatment. "There is no God in Abyssinia," said one of the chiefs to me some days ago, "if he allows Theodorus to live after burning the churches, and keeping in prison messengers from a friendly queen."

At present our position is most critical; we know not in the morning what the evening may bring. The Emperor daily riots in blood and murder; he lives but for one object—revenge! The whole country is in the most disorganized condition possible; anarchy rules supreme. After the rains it is possible that some of Theodorus' rivals will join the peasants in arms, take the field, and contest the power they see falling from his hands. But will they have courage to attack the wounded lion himself? I doubt it. They will boast when he is far off, but, at the mere mention of his name, fly to their strongholds, and leave the deluded peasants to fall easy victims to his rage and vengeance. But he himself cannot last much longer; the peasants, though they dare not face him, will murder every soldier they come upon; his army will dwindle and dwindle

down to nothing; and his last, his all—this Amba—will eventually fall into the hands of some rising man.

What our fate may be in a few months I dare not say—helpless beings in the very centre of a hostile nation who hate the white men, who would rejoice and glory if they could murder them, we have indeed but a poor chance if we fall into the hands of the ignorant and infuriated peasantry.

Should some great man take this Amba, how will he treat us? It is impossible to say; most probably try to make capital out of us. Would he let us go? No! certainly not; why should he?

Strangers in a distant land, victims of a faithless savage, though all may appear dark and dreary, we will not despond, but trust in Him who abandons not the innocent, but can and will deliver in time of trouble. We have also full confidence that our difficult position will call forth the sympathies of our Queen and country, and that before many months honour and justice will prevail over cruelty and treachery.

H. BLANC, M.D.,
Abyssinian Mission.

Magdala, August 31, 1867.

M. G. LE JEAN ON ABYSSINIA AND THEODORUS.

(Translated for the "Times of India" from the "Revue des Deux Mondes.")

THE traveller from Suez, proceeding along the African coast of the Red Sea, has nothing before him but small disconnected hills, of a reddish colour and of monotonous appearance; but on approaching the islet of Massowah, he finds the horizon bounded by a barrier like a long high wall, which is commanded by three or four lofty peaks, the summits of which are frequently lost in the clouds. This forms the most advanced rampart of an immense plateau 600 miles in breadth, and of a length as yet undetermined; and this plateau, which overhangs the shore to a height of 2,300 metres above the level of the sea, is Abyssinia. No State has had its limits more sharply defined by nature. This table-land, which has the mean temperature of Central Europe, and of which hardly one-twentieth of the soil remains uncultivated, is composed of arable land, the soil of which may vie in fertility with that of Flanders or of the Ukraine, and is intersected by two principal rivers and 200 lesser streams or rivulets, whose waters give vegetation and life to the country. At the foot of these mountains is a barren, yellow plain, stony and undulating, covered by gum-trees and other

thorny shrubs, its sands, and beds, and dry torrents extending to the sea, where a few wandering tribes seek scanty pastures and find water, often brackish. The burning air which one breathes here is often fatal to the Abyssinians, who inhale with it the deadly *nefas*, that terrible fever of the low lands. For this reason they appear to have formed no settlement here for centuries. Indeed, it is this very cause which has prevented their conquering Soudan, but it has always preserved them against their Mussulman neighbours of the Nile and Red Sea. The Abyssinian race is only African in so far that they inhabit the country. From their features, disposition, and good and bad qualities, and above all by their capability and cultivation, they seem to be allied to the Caucasian race, certainly more so than either the Hindoos or Persians. There is a sort of mystery connected with them which may probably be an interesting problem to the ethnological amateur. Everything connected with the origin of this nation seems obscure; their religion leads them to imagine themselves descendants of the Hebrew race, which, however, critical history will not accept. The first seat of indigenous civilization was at Axum, in the province of Tigre, a name which has gradually extended itself throughout Abyssinia, to the east of the river Takazze. The establishment of Christianity, the relations with the Greeks of Alexandria and the Roman Empire itself, and the conquest of Arabia Felix, date from the brilliant period of the Axumite kings, still powerful in the time of the Crusades. The transfer of the capital to Gondar a short time after marks the decadence of the Tigreans, and the rise of the Amharas, who appear to have

come from near the equator on the south—a strong, hardy, and warlike race, who assimilated themselves with the worship, manners, and in a lesser degree with the language of the subjugated race. At the present time all traces of this conquest seem happily forgotten, owing to the necessity which the Abyssinians have found of vigorously concerting themselves to resist the attacks of the great Mussulman States who attacked them on the east and west, and the hordes of savage and pagan tribes of Gallas who border them south.

We know that the people of Abyssinia have for more than fourteen centuries professed observance of an Oriental Catholic ritual, which from the interruption of relations with the rest of Christendom has been left to be operated on by Coptic and Judaic superstitions, that have greatly deceived most travellers as to the true character of their religion. The invasion of Egypt by the Mussulmans, in making the Church of Alexandria (from which that of Abyssinia received its hierarchy) an oppressed, persecuted, and barbarous Church, had the most disastrous influence upon that of the Upper Nile. The Abouna, or religious chief of Abyssinia, ought canonically to receive his investiture from the Patriarch of Alexandria; and the great organizer of the Abyssinian Church in the twelfth century, St. Thelka, Haimanot, having decided that the Abouna should always be a stranger—probably to prevent nepotism among the great feudal families—the result was easily to be foreseen. The Abyssinian clergy—generally learned and curious in theological study, who might have invented scholasticism if it had not existed—found themselves placed under igno-

rant and insolent monks brought from miserable Coptic convents, where they were bred, till they were fifty years of age, as eunuchs for the Mussulman harems. The Danubian Principalities have had their political phanariots for 150 years; and for seven centuries Abyssinia had its religious phanariots, all more or less dangerous, for they completely paralyzed the intellectual progress still possible on the banks of the Nile, particularly in regard to theology, jurisprudence, and natural history. The Portuguese, who saved the Ethiopian kingdom in the sixteenth century, brought with them the Jesuits, who lost more than can be imagined by their lofty arrogance, awkwardness, and bloodthirsty follies. The nation rose against them, and against the imbecile and savage king whom they had found entirely to secure their tyranny; and it is owing to the remembrance of this, held in terror by the Abyssinians, that we should attribute their horror of Europeans, and above all of the missionaries who have visited them during the last thirty-five years. Protestantism took the lead about 1830, and sent the Rev. Samuel Gobat, Swiss missionary—since called to the bishopric of Jerusalem—to Gondar. It pains me to speak severely of a man whose good intentions and personal morality place him above suspicion, but no traveller who has been a day in Abyssinia has seen things more falsely than Mr. Gobat. He was devoted and able, but vain and credulous—that is to say, a man least capable of acting upon the most knavish and *Byzantine* people in the East. He travelled over the country for three years, preaching, discussing with the *debteras* and priests, who, for a glass or two of tej (mead), made him every possible concession, and over-

whelmed him with exaggerated eulogies, which he has jotted down in his journal with inconceivable *naiveté*. He left the country, satisfied that he had sown in good ground; and the amazed society for propagating Protestantism sent some Moravian brethren to Tigre, who were, like most missionaries, personally honourable, but clumsy diplomatists. The Moravians thought they were acting with apostolic boldness in declaring rude, brutal war against all the traditions, good or bad, of the Abyssinian ritual. For instance, on a solemn fast-day they killed a cow, distributing its flesh gratuitously to all comers, considering it a great triumph to have induced a few poor people to sacrifice their scruples of conscience to their appetite. Their violent language in regard to the worship of the Virgin and saints, and, above all, their cynical talk respecting the Virgin, rendered them odious to the Tigreans, and Oubie, the official champion of the national worship, made himself extremely popular by expelling them from Abyssinia.

The battle of Dereskie took place on the 5th February, 1855. Three days afterwards the conqueror was crowned, amidst the acclamations of the army and clergy, in the very church at Dereskie which the vanquished of that evening had had built and ornamented (with a view to his own coronation), under the direction of a well-known French naturalist, Dr. Schimper. This mockery of fortune was not to be the least of Oubie's misfortunes. Kassa took the name of Theodorus, which had been borne by an Emperor who reigned, not ingloriously, about the twelfth century. This name indicated the character of his reign. A tradition, universally prevalent in Abyssinia, mentioned

by nearly every traveller since Bruce, says that an Emperor of the name of Theodore should re-establish the Ethiopian Empire in its former splendour, destroy Islam, and raise Jerusalem to the crescent—a headstrong and fallacious hope, by which a crushed and suffering people endeavoured to escape from the deceptions of the prêsent. The new Negus revived this name from the national legends, and affirmed with an easy audacity that he was the subject of the prophecies. It is certain everybody in Abyssinia thought so in 1855, if, indeed, the same opinion is not retained till now; but did the Emperor really think so himself? This is a nice question, and one which, after having personally known him, I do not know how to answer. I think, however, he was sincere, and this for reasons too numerous to mention. This idea gave him strange aspirations. It was then that he proposed to the Czar, his brother, at Moscow, to combine with him in a march to Jerusalem, to share the Mussulman Empire; but it made him, in a more practicable way, do many things resulting in profit to Abyssinia. It yet remained to finish with the remnant of the section which had yielded. The capture of the plateau of Amba-Hai completed the submission of Semen. On the summit, nearly 11,647 feet in height, Oubie had his treasures—40,000 talaris, much gold and silver in ingots, 7,000 carbines, all under the care of his son. The conqueror placed Oubie, loaded with chains, before the fortress, and made him tell the young prince that the life of his father depended on his submission. This cowardly measure had the desired effect, and the place capitulated. At Amba-Hai, in a neighbouring fortress, the gallant Sobhogadis Kassa had for seventeen years

been confined in chains himself, a son of the prince of that name, killed in the battle of Mai Islamai in 1831, and himself the victim of a notorious treason of Oubie. He ran the risk of only changing his chains, when his daughter, a very young and beautiful princess, courageously sought out the Emperor, and begged for her father's liberty. Her filial piety, but still more her beauty, made a favourable impression on the young conqueror, who released Sobhogadis, and made a favourite of the graceful suppliant. The conquest of Tigré was complete; the King gave this important vice-royalty to Belgada-Arœa, a brilliant soldier, without administrative capacity, and henceforth strong enough for anything; but he put Oubie in chains. Theodore then matured a project dear to Abyssinian patriotism; it was to commence a crusade against the Turks, who were masters of the low lands which had formerly belonged to Abyssinia. The disturbances in the south did not leave him time to act. There is in the range of mountains which separates Shoa from the body of the empire a Mussulman people of foreign race, the Wollos, an advanced colony of the powerful Gallas race, who, for more than three centuries, have, like a raging sea, beaten about the frontiers of Ethiopia, and of which they have already consumed a great portion. A confederation of independent chiefs, the most powerful of whom were then Oarket, Princess of Worra, and Adara-Bille, Lord of Tehaladere, the Wollos had excited the just indignation of the Abyssinian Christians. They were, in a degree, the foxes of Africa, lending their invincible cavalry to the highest bidder, and adding to the horror of civil war the intensity of their fanatic hatred of the Christians.

Theodore, who had some experience of these ferocious free-booters, swore that for the future he would prevent their ravaging the Christian provinces; and they had the imprudence to provoke him at the very time when his triumph was at its height. He learned that the Wollos, led by the Princess Oarket, had destroyed the steep embankments of the river Bachilo, and ravaged the Christian provinces, particularly the churches. Theodorus marched upon them. Oarket retreated, and the Negus, taking the left bank of the Bachilo as the basis of his operations, set himself to work to conquer the entire Wollos country. The latter, commanded by Adara-Bille, bravely gave battle to the Negus, and were cut to pieces; their chief fell on the field, and the prisoners were pitilessly mutilated. The survivors, giving up the struggle, raised the campaign, and retired to the mountains, leaving the conqueror to ransack the open country, and carry away thousands of captives, whom he distributed among his soldiers. The Emperor chose Magdala for his winter quarters; impregnable for the Abyssinians, on the left bank of the Bachilo, he made it at the same time his arsenal and principal state prison, and accumulated together thousands of carbines, which, thanks to time and bad management, are now very nearly useless. Theodore, although the conqueror, had lost the greater part of his army, and provisionally suspended operations against the Wollos.

The first acts of the Emperor Theodorus II. were marked by a practical sense and moderation which were in singular contrast with his present conduct. Possibly if when the bells of Dereskie announced his accession to the throne of David and of the Tasilides, he had indulged in a

retrospect, and thought of the time, still so recent, of his proscription and misfortunes, one can easily understand that his head had become turned. He has never, however, been more sane than he is at this critical hour; and the course that he has followed for four years fully justifies the admiration of which he was at first the object on the part of some Europeans. His idea was very simple: he would regenerate Abyssinia, and draw from its former civilization the elements of its renewal. This supremely chimerical notion had great attractions for the intense national pride of the Abyssinians, and it did not expose the Negus to that opposition which compelled the Czar Peter and the Sultan Mahmoud to inaugurate their reforms with bloodshed. Abyssinia, indeed, in the depth of its decadence offers to the eyes of the unprejudiced traveller the principal elements of a social condition sufficiently advanced. Feudalism exists, but not more powerfully than in England; the institutions are very democratic, the administrative system simple; the legislation is that of the Justinian Code, with some modifications necessitated by the Abyssinian temperament; ownership is well defined; individual rights are guaranteed by the privilege of appeal to the Emperor; family ties are secure, commerce protected, and political vengeance and the horrors of war neutralized by the inviolability of numerous *ghedem* (places of refuge). The law in itself is good and copious. It is the fault of the barbarity resulting from endless anarchy—where the nobility are engaged in fighting and pillaging, where the Church is greedy, justice is venal, marriage is annulled by the contagious example of the aristocracy, and where the right

of asylum is such—if caravans are sometimes robbed. This is not the fault of the conqueror of Dereskie, who has returned to the ancient Royal Code (Tarika Nagast), and employs it with pitiless rigour. During the first part of his reign judicial and religious reforms divided the attention of the Negus. The principal necessity of Abyssinia was the security of the roads and the open country generally, overrun as they were by bands of robbers. In a royal proclamation, dated from the camp, Ambajara, near Gondar (August, 1855), it was decreed "that everybody should return to his father's profession—the trader to his shop, the peasant to his plough." The order was executed with Draconian rigour, and things were seen and done that would be impossible anywhere but in Abyssinia. The people of Tisbha, who were incorrigible bandits, whose village was situated on a spur of Mount Ifag, came to Theodore's camp armed to the teeth, and begged the Negus to confirm their privilege, recognized by David the Great, to exercise the profession of their fathers. "What is that profession?" asked the Emperor, without distrust. "Highway robbery," replied they, insolently. "Listen, now," said Theodore, concealing his surprise; your profession is dangerous, and agriculture will be better. Go down to the plain of Lamghe, and cultivate it; it is the finest part of the kingdom. I will myself give you ploughs and oxen." They were immovable. The Negus ended by consenting to their demand, and dismissed them. As they were returning, proud of having as they thought intimidated their sovereign, they were joined on the road by a squadron of cavalry, the chief of which clearly showed them that, if David the Great had by charter

authorized them to live on the high road, his troops had a decree from a still greater and more powerful king, the "Holy King Lalibela," which authorized the gendarmerie to sabre the robbers. Thus (adds the author) he never rested, and I on my part felt no uneasiness, as I came to reside at Tisbha in January and May, 1863.

I have not yet alluded to two individuals who have had great influence over the Emperor Theodorus, although by some writers the extent of that influence has been exaggerated. They were two Englishmen, Messrs. James Bell and Walter Metcalfe Plowden. The latter had been English Consul at Gondar, and in 1849 had concluded a commercial treaty with Ras Ali. He had early foreseen the high destiny of Kassa, and was attached to him, following him everywhere, living partly on Kassa's liberality, and seldom using his official title of Consul, which, owing to the mistrust of the Abyssinians, he was not allowed to use. "We do not want them," said an Abyssinian chief to the French Consul at Massowah in 1856. "Let the foreign consuls create separate States for themselves in our empire. We have cordially received the traveller Plowden; it is said he is a consul, but if he had assumed his title," added the chief, in the boasting tone peculiar to his nation, "he would not have lived twenty-four hours." Mr. Bell was an old English naval volunteer, drawn to Abyssinia by the love of the unknown, attracted to the future Emperor by a sort of sympathy which almost amounted to worship. A long time before the battle of Dereskie he shared his fortune, good or bad, watching over him like a faithful dog, lying before his door; and this passionate sympathy was fully returned. The Em-

peror willingly listened to his bold, sincere, and disinterested advice, and made him explain to him history, comparative forces, politics, and the position of the European States. One may judge from one single fact how strong was the unparalleled influence which Mr. Bell exercised over this extraordinary man. He had one day asked for justice from his royal friend, for some grievance of the nature of which I am not aware, and not obtaining what he asked for, remembered an old feudal custom which permitted an Abyssinian gentleman while armed and mounted to speak to his sovereign with the most absolute impunity. Without loss of time he takes his sword and buckler, mounts his horse, and goes to seek the Emperor, who is seated in the midst of his chiefs at the door of his tent, and reproaches him sharply for his caprices, tyranny, and ingratitude. Theodore says nothing; in the evening the two friends sup together as usual; the Negus goes out for an instant; he re-enters, carrying a large stone on his neck, and bows himself before Mr. Bell. By the law of the country the injured party has a right to this reparation on the part of the offender, whatever may be their respective ranks; and the Negus, a restorer of old customs, was not inclined to withdraw from them. Mr. Bell, surprised and confounded, threw himself before him, took the stone in his hands, and begged with respectful bluntness that the Negus would not forget he was his sovereign. It should be mentioned that this Englishman, treated by Theodore with such regard, had the title of *likamankuas*—that is, he was one of the four officers who in battle wore the same costume as the Emperor, to bewilder the enemy excited to kill him—a perilous post,

purely honorary. Bell received neither fee nor fief; but the honour was extremely valued among a purely monarchical and chivalrous people. Mr. Bell was the introducer of all the Europeans who came to his prince. His kindness had no limit; he recognized no national distinctions, and always endeavoured to foster in Theodorus those sentiments of sympathy towards France which were natural to the Negus.

In order to obtain some guarantee of peace on the frontier, and security for the Mussulmans of the interior, Said contented himself by sending as ambassador to the Emperor the Patriarch of the Christians of Egypt, Abouna Daoud (David). David arrived at Debra Tabor in December, 1856. The first interview between him and the Negus was by no means amicable. The Negus, with that feverish defiance which is the most distinguishing trait in his character, was at a loss to imagine why a Christian prelate should come to him under the protection of a Mussulman prince; and concluding he was a Mussulman disguised as a patriarch, coolly asked him whether it was devotion to the cause of Christianity, or obedience to Said Pasha that had brought him to Abyssinia. The behaviour of the Abouna fostered Theodore's supposition. David openly showed, while in Abyssinia, the peculiarity of the slaves of the Gallas. He did not at first understand with what a haughty spirit he had to deal, and thought to treat with Theodore as his predecessors had treated the effeminate kings of Goudar. He went so far, that the Emperor, without saying anything, took a pistol from his belt, and, thus armed, placed himself before the terrified Patriarch. "My father," he calmly said, "bless me." David, falling

on his knees, tremblingly gave the benediction demanded. But this lesson did not cure him; another time he alluded to excommunication—a very grave measure, for it might have resulted in a revolution. The Emperor called the head of his Church, Salama, to release him from excommunication, and the Abouna, perfectly understanding the imperative sense of this request, begged him to defer it. Theodorus had assigned a zereba, or hedged enclosure, to each of the two prelates, not far from his pavilion, where he kept them almost under arrest, although they were attended with care and obsequious respect. David from the threshold of his door stretched a menacing hand towards the Emperor's tent, and pronounced the canonical excommunication, to which Salama, standing in the midst of his zereba, answered by a veto no less legal. The Patriarch then, turning himself towards his suffragan, told him angrily that he was his superior, and could unbind nothing which he had bound. "You are my superior at Alexandria," replied Salama, "but in Abyssinia you are nothing, and I am all." "Rebel priest," said David, "I excommunicate you with your master." "And I," rejoined the Abouna, "excommunicate you also, and my excommunication is alone valid." In short, for two days the terrible formula flew from the one zereba to the other, to the great scandal of the soldiers, who could no longer believe in these two infallible arbiters of the faith. The Emperor was not sorry to afford his soldiers this practical lesson in scepticism, and to destroy in their minds regard for a power he feared to contend against. He stopped the scandal when he thought it had lasted long enough, and the Patriarch David returned to Cairo without having done anything. In retaliation, he

caused all that the Abyssinians possessed in Jerusalem to be illegally seized—that is, the convent founded by the ancient kings of Ethiopia for Abyssinian pilgrims to the Holy Land. The convent and its dependencies were sold to the Russian Bishop for 60,000 dollars, which went into the Patriarch's treasury. The poor Abyssinians protested; the Pasha of Jerusalem was won over—they say by a *bakshish*, given on purpose—put them in prison, and confirmed the spoliation; so that the Emperor has never pardoned the Copts, nor their Mussulman patrons.

In January, 1861, Theodorus put himself at the head of his army, and marched towards the Tembeu Mountains, where Negousie lay encamped. The Emperor's machinations, mixed with promises and threatenings, had already broken up Negousie's unfortunate army. The night which followed the arrival of the Emperor before the Tigrean camp, a herald, to the terror of all, was heard to make the following proclamation from a neighbouring hill, which was hidden by the darkness: "Thus says Jan-hoi, I pardon all those who shall this night quit the camp of Negousie, and I assign to them three *ghedem* (places of refuge)—namely, the church at Axum, that of Adona, and my own camp; as for those I find to-morrow under arms, they may expect no mercy." In the morning, Negousie had only with him his faithful Agaus and a few Tigreans, the majority of the soldiers having dispersed and gone back to their villages, whilst the chiefs who were most compromised retired to the two churches of Axum and Adowa. The unfortunate man Negousie, shedding tears of rage, collected his last adherents, made with them an opening in the enemy's army, and managed to gain the

mountains with twenty troopers. Vigorously pursued, some of his men lost every day by death or desertion, the pursuit was ended by some peasants, who recognized him by a broken tooth, and brought him, as well as his brother, to the Emperor Theodorus. It is said that before his conqueror the pretender showed but little diguity. Theodorus seemed on his part disposed to mercy; he told the two brothers that he would leave them their feoffs if they would pay him tribute, and made them attend at supper. The two captives retired to rest full of hope; but the next day the wind had changed, and the Emperor ordered them to lose their right hands and left feet, and, by a refinement of cruelty, prevented them from obtaining anything to quench the burning thirst which always accompanies this dreadful operation. Tesama succumbed the same day; but the robust constitution of Negousie held out longer, and it was thought that he would recover if the Emperor had permitted them to give him the attention which was rarely refused to suppliants. The third day he begged that an end might be put to his intolerable sufferings by the sword. So died the only man who had seriously endangered the political edifice which Theodorus had reared. His death, which was followed by that of his principal officers, executed at Axum, in spite of the place of refuge and the promised protection, was imputed to the negligence of France, and has been the strongest accusation against her —we have seen on what grounds. As for the conqueror, his infatuation was a proof of the uneasiness with which the intervention of the French had inspired him. When he entered Axum, after the execution of the conquered, and received the trembling deputation of the Axumite

clergy, he made a speech, in which these words occur—the most vainglorious, perhaps, that ever man has dared to utter: "I have made a compact with God; He has promised not to descend to the earth to smite me, and I have promised not to ascend to heaven to strive with Him."

The causes of the rupture with Egypt were numerous, and were everywhere due to geographical circumstances. Nature had clearly traced the limits of the two States; but at the foot of the last path which leads to the Abyssinian plateau, in the latitude of Khartoum and Massowah, lived five or six tribes of shepherds, who had descended from Abyssinia two or three centuries ago, probably on account of an excessive increase of population, and who nominally acknowledged the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Empire (Manghesta Aithiopiya). The Turks, conquerors of Nubia in 1820, profited by this peculiar position of the tribes, who were nearer to the Egyptian than the Gondar garrisons, to subject them to their yoke. In 1856 Said Pasha had promulgated in their favour a series of wise and protective rules, which the rapacity of the Egyptian agents made a dead letter; and the colonists, who had been led by the enlightened and truly civilized administration of Arakel Nubar, and his son, Hassan Beg, to hope for better days, fell into the hands of rapacious freebooters, who changed the taxes, and arbitrarily increased their demands each year. On this account a daily increasing desire was felt for the government of King Theodorus II.; but the Abyssinian prefects of the frontier, instead of maintaining these good dispositions, in prospect of eventualities to come, feebly opposed the Mussulman conquest against the unfor-

tunate population of a country as large as Portugal, who were subjected to frequent rapid and murderous raids. In addition to these embarrassments, there was established in the very midst of the people, at the seventh military store of Gondar, a camp of Egyptian refugees, commanded by a man well known in Eastern Africa—Oued-Nimr, the son of the Panther King, of whom we have before spoken, who led there for three years a dramatic existence. A faithful inheritor of his father's hate, Oued-Nimr gathered round him in the city of Mai-Gowa a number of Bedouins, to whom the Egyptian yoke was hard to bear; he directed incessant raids against the Arab tribes who were subject to the Viceroy of Egypt, and when he found them sufficiently harassed, he ascended the Abyssinian plateau, where the Negus had given him a fief as important as Cafta. In May, 1860, Oued-Nimr, who was created a general in the service of the Negus, made a brilliant *coup de main* against the Choukrie tribe, the most powerful of the Arabian tribes of Nil, and had recovered in the name of Theodorus II. the imposts of the whole of Upper Nubia. The Governor of Khartoum responded to this bravery by a bold attack on Mai-gowa, which was burnt, and Oued-Nimr, beaten in an unimportant fight, delayed his vengeance till a more favourable time. To continue: the attitude of the two States, Egypt and Abyssinia, in 1841, was that of two neighbours at bitter enmity against each other, but who hesitated to commence serious hostilities, and who only fought by offensive proclamations. The great anxiety of the Negus was to finish with the Gallas. I have elsewhere spoken of these curious, mysterious people, who are the brothers of the Abyssinians in many features, and in their

moral character ; and whom the latest travellers have found settled close on the equator, on the shores of the great Nile lakes. Emigrating about three centuries ago from the plains where flows the Wedi (a large, semi-fabulous river, which yet awaits the explorations of a discoverer), they have, like the flowing sea, overrun the vast empire of the Negus in its decline, and have in succession reduced to insignificance some forty-two kingdoms calling themselves monarchies. They have founded in their turn numerous States and monarchies, as Gondar, and republics, as Djimma; but they are weak from their isolation, and the want of all confederate ties. In the midst of this barbarous invasion, five or six Abyssinian kingdoms have arisen, to which tradition gives the name of Christian, but which their separation from the great Abyssinian trunk has driven back to barbarism. There are, among others, Gindjers, Gouragua, and Kaffa—which last has given its name to the valuable berry which Europe continues to buy under the improper name of Mocha coffee.

I now enter upon the relation of still more delicate events, as I had been led to play a part which had never been voluntarily undertaken by me. The reader can easily understand the repugnance which I feel in dwelling on these remembrances, and the delicacy which obliges me to touch but lightly on facts, rather than enter into detail. Called, in May, 1862, to represent the French Government at Gondar, and to sustain in Abyssinian affairs a congenial relation with the Negus, I reached Theodorus eight months too late. He gave me a brilliant reception, and made no effort to disguise the joy he felt at this official proof of the friendly disposition of the French Government. He

had just received a testimony no less flattering from the English. The English Foreign-office, after much hesitation, had resolved to send a successor to the accomplished and unfortunate Plowden. It had selected, from a considerable number of candidates, an officer of the Indian Army, Captain Duncan Cameron, already familiar with the East, from a residence as Consul at Poti, on the Black Sea, and who was, moreover, full of friendly feelings towards the Negus and the new Abyssinian Empire. Theodorus had given him a gracious reception, assured him of his regard towards England and France, and their respective sovereigns; and alluded to the Emperor Napoleon III.,' who was, he said, wrongfully prejudiced against him, and to his desire to renew relations with the French Government. Learning that Mr. Cameron's Secretary was a French traveller, he entrusted him with a very courteous and becoming letter to the Emperor Napoleon, charging him to take it quickly. Theodorus has been accused of imprudence in sending such a message by an unknown tourist; but the Emperor, after the provocations and insults with which he had annoyed Egypt, feared that, on his envoys entering Egyptian territory, if they were Abyssinians, they would not escape ill-usage at the hands of the unclean infidels; and he knew that a European would have nothing to fear by way of retaliation. It was about this time that I reached the Emperor, who received me, as I have said, in a very friendly manner, and begged I would accompany him in a campaign which he had undertaken against Tedla-Gualu. Anxious not to lose such an opportunity of preserving the good-will of the Emperor in the interests of the mission with which I was charged, I did not hesitate

to follow him. I think it well to quote here some extracts from my diary, in order not to omit any of the characteristic incidents at the outset of the journey.

Towards eleven o'clock we descended a very precipitous slope, and through the great trees we saw a magnificent plain open out, covered by rich prairies, furrowed by ravines, where rolled a furious torrent, which I was told was the Abai, or White Nile. This torrent, that from the height at which I was seemed but a long thread of foam, agreed so little with what I had heard of the Abyssinian Nile, that I was only persuaded it was the Nile on arriving at the Portuguese bridge, when we made the mid-day halt. This bridge is a boldly-executed structure, and was the work of the Portuguese engineers in the employ of the Abyssinian Neguses of the sixteenth century. It somewhat resembled fine Roman bridges—that, for instance, of El-Kantara, on the Rummel, near Constantina. It would almost seem that for a time the Portuguese recovered the secret of the Roman cement, now vainly sought for; some fragments of the parapets have fallen along the piers, the stones of which even the furious torrent has been unable to disjoint. Two small forts, garrisoned by a party of picked men, commanded this important passage.

The Emperor placed himself at a window of the lower fort, and, grouped a little under him, we witness the march past. It is really an imposing sight. That which is wanting in order and discipline is redeemed by the picturesque, and still more by a military excitement, very pleasing to a European officer. Cavalry, infantry, baggage, and followers all descend, or rather roll, like a thick cloud of dust, amidst the glittering of thousands of lances. They

cross the bridge in close column, at the double. Etiquette obliges all the officers to march on foot while passing before the window where the Emperor reclines, so that we lost the spectacle of the superior officers and grand vassals of the empire, themselves surrounded by their vassals.

I was shown Ras Engeddah, the dethroned Prince of Gojam. He was kept some years in fetters, and recently liberated; and he now shows his zeal even against his former subjects. He is a very fine man, of imposing appearance, and has a sort of proud and defiant dejection, which renders him very interesting. I also distinguished in the crowd a group of twenty or thirty sharp-shooters, dressed as Arabs, perfectly drilled, and commanded by a very handsome young man, in a red caftan and Mussulman's turban; this was no other than Naib-Mohammed, Prince of Akeeko and nominal sovereign of Massawa; for, although a Mussulman and vassal of the Porte, he holds in fief from Abyssinia sixteen villages on the coast of Halai. It was reported that the Prince of Akeeko had come to the camp to solicit the confirmation of the deed of enfeoffment of his holding; which deed is very old, as it was seen in the time of Bruce. The march past lasted four hours, not less than 40,000 men having passed. I felt a certain pleasure in looking at this mass, which, without any apparent confusion, was evidently swayed by one active and powerful hand, which it implicitly obeyed. It is the army of order, ready to crush any attempt at reviving the prerogatives of a selfish and incorrigible feudalism. Such is the general impression. At four o'clock, the Negus gave the signal of departure by crossing the bridge. I followed

him on foot, and we rapidly ascended the steep ascent on the right side of the river, to avoid the crowd which encumbered the Imperial route. It is one of the malicious fancies of that indefatigable marcher to give people that are admitted to his rude intimacy these violent marches. We encamped a league further on, in a beautiful prairie on the banks of a charming river, which is called, I know not why, Black Water (Tokom Ohha). My tent was hardly pitched, when I perceived a column of 200 or 300 men bending their steps towards the head-quarters of the Negus, uttering cries of joy. I drew near, and perceived an enormous lion on a litter, with two spear wounds in his flank; the slayer was borne triumphantly on the shoulders of his comrades; his right side was profusely bleeding from four wounds he had received from the lion's paw. He was a little soldier, with a remarkably modest demeanour. The Emperor gave him thirty talaris, a fortune for a poor infantry soldier.

Many nobles of mark resolved to surprise the Negus during one of those daring expeditions which he made (more especially in the night), and to put him to death. The most important among those conspirators was the Prefect of the province of Alafa, who, unfortunately for himself, made a confidante of his wife as to the conspiracy. At the moment when he had mounted his horse for the purpose of joining the Imperial camp, the matron came to him, and besought him to buy a costly dress which she coveted. The husband refused, and the dame coolly replied, "You shall pay me for it"—a remark the meaning of which he did not give himself the trouble to inquire into. She kept her word, however; for some few days after-

wards she presented herself to the Negus, and revealed to him all the details of the conspiracy. Theodorus, more surprised than alarmed, looked into her eyes and said, "One never does a thing without having some interest in it; what is it that has induced you to make a revelation which will lead to the punishment of your husband and your son?" "I thought," she said, "that some one of the conspirators would reveal the conspiracy, and that then those who belong to me would be irrevocably lost. In coming to you to reveal the plot I have a right to demand of you the life of one—that of my son, the only one that is dear to me." Without giving her any promise, Theodorus dismissed her. At five in the morning of the 1st March, 1863, in the centre of a battalion in square, eighteen of the conspirators were drawn up before the Negus, and a hand and a foot of each of the eighteen were cut off; all persons were forbidden to give them help or assistance, and all of them died, after suffering agonies more or less prolonged, some few of them being devoured by hyenas. The son of the Prefect of the province of Alafa was no more spared than any of the others.

From Shoa to Tigre there were disturbances caused by two or three rebels, more or less obscure; and this material anarchy was the consequence of the moral anarchy under which Abyssinia had so long languished. The Negus had valiantly struggled against this at the outset of his reign; but he began to weary of the struggle, and his spirit was absorbed by one gloomy thought. "God," said he, "who has drawn me from out the dust to supplant legitimate princes, has not performed this miracle without having a motive. I have a mission, but what is it? At first I be-

lieved that it was given me to raise this people by means of prosperity and peace; but, in spite of all the good I have done for them, more rebels rise against me than ever rose in the time of the worst tyranny. It is evident I have deceived myself. This is a stiffnecked people, and it is needful to chastise them before they are called to enjoy the blessings which Providence has intended for them. I now see my true *role;* I shall be the Flail of the Wicked—the Judgment of God upon Abyssinia!" And as the beginning of the new programme for his reign, he had engraved upon the gun-carriages and howitzers these words, "The Flail of the Wicked—Theodorus."

This strange idea had the effect of destroying in him the last scruple which had restrained him on the edge of a terrible brink. Since the retreat from Godjam the army had become a prey to the most menacing state of fermentation; the secret emissaries of Gallas penetrated into their ranks, and spoke to them; to men who at this time were overwhelmed with privations they spoke of the abundance which reigned with their master at Djibela, and of the rich encampments of Godjam and Damoti; so that desertions also multiplied without number, and discipline relaxed day by day.

In order to retain his soldiers about him, Theodorus, under the most futile pretexts, delivered over the most beautiful provinces of his empire to all the excesses of an unchecked soldiery. Sometimes he only permitted a razzia upon the horses, the mules, and the silver money; but more often it was an order, comprehensive and laconic, "*Eat* all." During three months—from March to June, 1863—fourteen provinces, with a superficial area equal to that of

the whole of Switzerland, were thus *eaten*, one after another.

The pretext which served for the ravaging of Dembea, which is called the flower of the crown of Abyssinia, was, that the inhabitants had allowed a Mussulman chief, who had been imprisoned amongst them, to escape. It is related that when the pillagers returned to the camp, the King, seated on an eminence, recognized amongst their booty a favourite mule of the Abouna Salama, who then inhabited the highlands of Dembea, and that he cried out, "Ah! the brigands, without my orders they have pillaged my beautiful province of Dembea," and that he shed a few tears—which deceived no one.

An anticipated event made a happy diversion from these bloody scenes: The Negus' Ambassador returned to Gondar in the first days of September, bearing an answer from the French Government to the letter of Theodorus II., who, proud of his diplomatic success, invited all the Europeans settled in Abyssinia to come to Gondar, to assist at the reading of the Imperial message from France; but he had previously had the letter opened and translated, and it is therefore not surprising that the contents were pretty well known to the hearers before the reading began; and this, without indiscretion, enabled me to concert favourably with my British colleague, and the most influential members of the little colony, and to form an opinion as to whether the disposition of the Negus seemed favourable to the instructions I had received. The official letter demanded in firm but courteous terms the toleration of the religious mission of the Roman Catholics protected by France. I must here do justice to the missionaries, who,

directed by the English Consul and Mr. Martin Flad, their principal leader, were very anxious to offer their opinions upon this religious question in a tolerant spirit, and conformably, as they said, with reason and the enlightened spirit of the Protestant religion.

All this diplomacy was, however, totally useless. The Negus had been much irritated by a paragraph in the letter relative to the Roman Catholic missionaries. "I know," said he, "the tactics of the European Governments when they wish to annex an Eastern kingdom. They send missionaries first, then consuls to support the missionaries, and then battalions to support the consuls. I am not a Rajah of Hindustan, to be treated thus; I would rather deal with battalions at once." After a series of curiously characteristic scenes, Theodorus replied to what he thought a provocation on the part of France, by an order for the expulsion of the French agent (September 28, 1863).

I hastened to return to Massowah before the news of my disgrace became known on the road, as otherwise I should have been subject to an immense deal of inconvenience and delay from the local authorities. I was for the future to be reduced to the character of a disinterested witness, but was far from indifferent to the events about to transpire in the country, and in which a personal misunderstanding had not weakened my sympathy. I had not, however, allowed myself to be carried away by any illusion, and felt therefore little disappointment.

I was on a very intimate footing with my English colleague, Captain Cameron. While breakfasting together on the day of our expulsion, Cameron laughingly said,

"Well, colleague, are the Emperor's chains heavy?" "Have you any idea of trying?" I replied, in the same tone. "Ah! who knows?" Alas! this brave man Cameron little thought how truly he spoke when he referred to the probability of his being put in irons.

My expulsion left the field open to Theodorus' new favourite, the French agent to whom I have before alluded. He was an energetic, intelligent, and faithful young man, but quite devoid of tact or prudence. His pluck, and a certain respectful familiarity which is not a bad form of flattery, quite captivated the Emperor, who, a soldier, liked such hardy, "soldierlike," as they say in English, characters. It was at least a fruit of fresh flavour for Theodore; he was tired of the dull obsequiousness and timidity of the missionaries, who, after they had made for him cannons, made him brandy, and although calling them officially "his children," in his humorous moments he styled them *gheves* (sycophants). About this time Theodorus received a visit from an English missionary who has attained considerable note in a certain portion of the religious world. This was the Rev. Mr. Stern, famous for a daring journey into Yemen, and an excellent work on Abyssinia, entitled, "A Mission among the Falashas." He was coolly received the first time by the Negus, who said, "I am very tired of your Bible." He obtained permission to return to Massowah, but had the imprudence to let slip the opportunity of at once returning. Surprised to see him with a second petition in October, 1863, the Emperor told him severely, "You have much offended me in not using the permission I gave you to return to Massowah; as you are a stranger, I pardon you, but those of my sub-

jects who ought to have enlightened you shall be severely punished." He then caused the bastinado to be so cruelly administered to Mr. Stern's two confidential servants that one of them died the following night, and the other some days afterwards. Mr. Stern, compelled to be a dumb witness of this savage spectacle, involuntarily bit the first finger of his hand. This gesture has a particular meaning among the Abyssinians, denoting the menace of momentary impotent anger. This movement did not escape Theodorus' notice, and it so affected him that when Mr. Stern returned to his house he sent for him to sup with him at the Imperial table. But his courtiers had no idea of the missionary getting off so easily; they clamoured for the same punishment for him that would be awarded to any audacious stranger who had menaced their King; and the Negus, although alleging that Mr. Stern attached no importance to his gesture, acceded to their wishes, probably from the false shame of wishing to appear to be influenced by the supposed inviolability of an English subject. Mr. Stern was recalled, brutally extended on the floor, and received the bastinado, less severely probably than his unfortunate servants, but severely enough to keep him in bed for some time afterwards.

A domiciliary visit, made on the completion of these doings, to the houses of all the agents of the English Bible Societies, brought to light many letters in German and English relative to the biography of the Emperor, and the latest events which had transpired in Abyssinia. Theodorus had the documents translated, and these letters, written without party prejudice, by people desirous of retaining a souvenir of events which had taken place under

their eyes, threw him into a violent passion. He immediately issued orders to arrest the three most culpable offenders; but the soldiers, who were unable to make this distinction, thought proper to put everybody connected with the Jenda and Darna missions in irons, together with two young ladies, Miss Flad and Miss Rosenthal. The Negus interrogated the former separately, hoping to obtain a confession from her by intimidation. She simply said that it was the custom among the Franks to take notes of anything interesting in their travels. Finding he could obtain no further information, he ordered the two ladies, with Mr. Flad, to be released; and, moreover, to give the matter an impartial aspect, he recalled all the Europeans in Abyssinia to a sort of High Court at Gondar, summoning also Messrs. Flad and Rosenthal, at whose houses he had made the most alarming discoveries. The documents of accusation were read, the Emperor demanding of the jury what sentence a European Court would inflict on those who spoke against their sovereign. "Death!" the President of the commission unhesitatingly replied; "but we invoke your Majesty's clemency for strangers, whom we believe to be more culpable from misunderstanding than intention."

This apparent abandonment of the indictment was, for those who knew the Emperor, more convincing than the most subtle argument, which would probably have simply irritated him, and would at the same time have resulted in the overthrow of the accusers, advocates, and judges. "I will be merciful," said Theodorus, "and commute the sentence you have pronounced against them into confinement in irons for Messrs. Stern and Rosenthal;" and ad-

dressing himself to the latter, said, "How dare you be so bold as to judge of a prince of whom you know nothing, save what you have gleaned by hearsay?" This was logical enough, but Mr. Rosenthal might have objected on the plea that there was only crime where there was publicity. "You are perhaps ignorant," said the Negus, "that the law of our empire offers you one resource, of which I would willingly see you avail yourself, as becomes a man of mettle: you can say anything about me you please with impunity, provided you can support your words on horseback, sword in hand, against one of my champions. Do you desire this?" It can be easily guessed how Mr. Rosenthal, who never in his life before had handled anything sharper than the spiritual weapons of theology, received this proposition. But the most violent wound which the condemned papers inflicted on Theodorus II. was, not the description of the useless barbarities committed during the two previous years, but the fact—although spoken of publicly, as if known to all Abyssinia—that he was the offspring of a slave who at one time was a vendor of *kousso* (a medicinal root).

Some time after this an arbitrary act, for which even now no reason is assigned, threw a gloom over the European residents in Abyssinia. The English Consul, Mr. Cameron, was put in irons. This violation of the law of nations has given rise to many versions, more or less romantic, which have gone the round of all the European journals, and which have been received somewhat in the spirit of gossip and raillery at Alexandria, from whence they emanated. The most reasonable explanation seems this: Mr. Cameron, on leaving Abyssinia in November,

1862, took with him the agent that the Negus had forced upon him, and who was undoubtedly a spy, but dismissed him directly he crossed the frontier, and this had touched Theodorus' pride. Besides this, he (Cameron) had been making a long tour in the neighbouring districts of Sennar and Gallabat, to promote the commercial and political interests of Great Britain. Theodorus II., who could not understand why a diplomatic agent should interest himself in commercial matters, imagined Mr. Cameron's object was to consort with his mortal enemies, the Egyptians, who had received the Consul with every mark of sympathy; and to crown all, he was offended at having received a letter from the London Foreign-office, signed by Lord Russell, and not by the Queen of England herself. "I wrote to Victoria," said he, with evident irritation, "and not to this Mr. Russell (*ato* Russell), of whom I know nothing." This was, however, probably only an excuse, as in January he had been very pleased at receiving a letter from the French Government, signed by M. Thouvenel. It is true that in sending this letter to Theodorus, I gave him to understand that M. Thouvenel was the *Afa-Negus*, literally *Bouche de l'Empéreur Napoleon III., Orateur de la Couronne.* Be this as it may, Mr. Cameron was kept in irons, on the bank of the river Kaha, in a tent contiguous to head-quarters, and a guard kept over him night and day. And no improvement appears to have taken place in his dreadful situation during the last ten months [and that is now three years ago]. His servants and European *employés* share the same fate. Among them was a young Irishman, eighteen years of age, who, after having led the perilous life of an elephant-hunter in

Nubia for several months, was seized with an irresistible desire to see Abyssinia and its sovereign. Knowing that the Emperor was fond of scenes of war and the chase, he had brought with him as a present a beautiful carpet, on which was a representation of the well-known *spahi*, Jules Gerrard, hunting the lion; he had shown it to me at Adoua with satisfaction, and seemed to imagine great things from it. He arrived at the moment of Mr. Cameron's arrest; still, he was well received, and the carpet was presented.

"What impertinent people these English are," said Theodorus to his officers; "here is a man who brings me a picture predicting that I shall be killed by the Turks. You see the man with the *tarbouch**—the Turk killing the lion! Who is the Ethiopian lion but myself? Meanwhile, before the Turks do kill me, let the Englishman be put in irons."

The poor lad asked in surprise, "What have I done?"

"You have done nothing," said the Emperor, relenting, "but as I have put your Consul in irons, you will hate me, *and he who is not friendly towards me must not be a free man.*"

Two months afterwards Mr. Cameron had a new companion in irons; it was no other than the favourite, who was absent at the time of the arrest, and, yielding to a good impulse, sought a morning audience with the Emperor, begging him, as a civilized sovereign,

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* Gerrard, in his uniform as a *spahi* (Turkish horse soldier), wears the tarbouch.

to set Mr. Cameron and his friends at liberty. Unfortunately, his knowledge of the Amharic tongue was very bad, and, in his confusion, it seems that he substituted an imperative term for a word of supplication. "Do you hear this ass," said Theodore, "who pretends to dictate to me? As he takes such an interest in his Consul, let him share his irons."

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